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ABSTRACT

This training manual is intended for use as the basis of a training program by a trainer or as a tool for self-directed learning by an independent reader. An introduction (Chapter 1) looks at the user in relation to the training program: who will use the training manual, locating oneself, building on one's relationship with adult literacy learning programs, using the text for both training and independent reading, and developing networks of support. Part 1 (chapters 2-6) looks at the planning of the adult literacy learning program by considering what kind of literacy for adults one is trying to promote through the literacy learning program; what kind of participant group one will work with and where adult literacy learners will come from; what kind(s) of teaching-learning approaches will be used in our adult literacy learning program; how it will be determined whether the program will be successful; and how one can ensure that the goals and the goals of the participants match. Part 2 (chapters 7-9) looks at how to resource the program. General principles of resource management are followed by looking in particular at housing the learning group, equipping state space, and provision of funds for the program. Discussions follow of the selection and support of the facilitators and of the provision of teaching-learning materials. Part 3 (chapters 10-12) examines how the program will be run and its activities monitored; how far the adult literacy learning program can be widened into other activities; and what plans can be made for the participants and other stakeholders to continue after the end of the program. Each chapter includes informational material, activities, and key questions. Appendixes include case studies, notes to trainer, case studies questions, and 67 references and further reading. (YLB)

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ED 459 345

Widening Literacy

A Training Manual for Managers of Adult Literacy Learning Programs

"the biggest problem with existing literacy learning programs is helping the participants to transfer what they learn in the classroom into use in their daily lives"

"helping groups with their literacies may be better then asking them to learn our literacy"

"non-literate persons are already engaging in literacy activities; our aim is to help them do this better"

"no-one has benefited from *learning* literacy; they only benefit from *using* literacy"

"using community-based texts in addition to the primer will help the people to learn more effectively"

"involving the community in our planning and management is a challenge but an exciting challenge"

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Note to the User

This training manual has been developed to serve two purposes

a) to be used as the basis of a ***training program****.*
To this end, some comments are addressed to the Trainer.

b) to be read independently of a training program as a tool for ***self-directed learning****. To this end, some remarks are addressed to the Independent Reader.*

Both sets of users may of course use this manual in whichever way they prefer, starting where they wish to start and finishing where they wish to finish. But we recommend that you look at the Introduction before you begin to work on any section which touches upon your current interest.

And for the Trainer, we strongly recommend that at an early stage you look at Appendix A which seeks to help you to plan your training course. It will indicate some of the things you need to prepare to make the training program most effective, some of the instructions you may need to pass on to the trainees.

We hope that you will find this training manual as helpful as we found the process of writing it has been.

—Alan Rogers
—Joanie Cohen-Mitchell
—Udaya Manandhar
June 2000

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Learning literacy from real literacy materials – a literacy class using an election poster for learning, Bangladesh. Alan Rogers

Introduction

Chapter 1

Who this Training Manual is For and How it Can be Used

This introductory section will look at yourself in relation to the training program:

- *who will use this training manual?*
- *locating yourself*
- *building on your relationship with adult literacy learning programs*
- *using this text for both training and independent reading*
- *developing networks of support.*

1. Who Will Use this Manual?

This training manual is intended for all those persons at **middle level of management in government or non-governmental or private voluntary organizations (NGOs or PVOs) who have responsibility for designing and managing adult literacy learning programs in the context of developing societies.**

Other persons – senior managers with indirect responsibility for such programs, trainers, academics and students, and in some cases facilitators – may also use this manual. We can regard these people as '*eavesdroppers*'; they are listening to (and at times are caught up in) someone else's conversation. For the main group of users of this training manual will normally be NGO and government decision-makers in adult education programs, such as headquarters or district education officers with oversight of adult literacy learning activities in the field. They will include both short-term project staff and longer-term program staff, permanent staff and some temporary staff such as supervisors. Most will be full-time, a few part-time.

The manual then is a **management tool**. It is not a training of trainers' manual or a facilitators' manual dealing with the classroom situation. It is about how to organize the program and how to facilitate the facilitator.

2. Locating Yourself as a Manager

See Chap 10

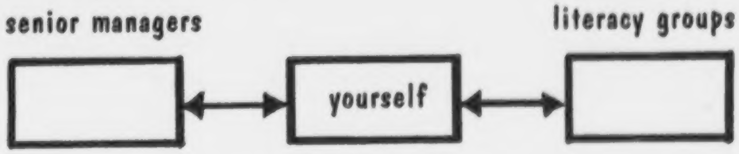
First, we may wish to reflect on our role as a middle level manager. We may see ourself as a bridge between, on the one hand, the local communities in which the adult literacy learning program is located (the facilitators and local support group, the participants, their families, and the groups they belong to, if any) and on the other hand, the senior managers in our organization, and the national (and international) sponsoring agencies who may be supporting our program.

See Chap 7

Part of our task is to help these two groups to interact. We will need to see the program through the eyes of these different groups – to bring the voice of the local communities into the headquarters building, to represent their interests, and at the same time to bring the facilities and resources of the center out into the community. We will need to speak with at least two voices, while at the same time remaining true to ourself, our own commitments and visions.

ACTIVITY 1.1:

Locate yourself as a middle level manager, acting as a bridge between different groups? Who are they?



3. Locating Yourself in Relation to the Adult Literacy Learning Program

We also need to look at our experience of managing adult literacy learning programs. We may have considerable experience already. On the other hand, we may never have done this before, and have been asked by our agency to start a new program.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAM

In either case, it should be possible for us to identify some challenges which we either have faced or which we anticipate we will have to face. What have been (or will be) some of our problems? And how did we (or will we hope to) deal with these? To make this task manageable, we suggest that you limit your list to three of the most important challenges.

ACTIVITY 1.2:

Some important challenges in managing an adult literacy learning program and how they can be dealt with:

1.

2.

3.

Others:

TRAINER:

METHOD: Small group exercise; or brainstorm followed by small groups

These challenges may fall under three main headings:

- issues relating to **management** (for example resourcing, monitoring, evaluation, recruitment of staff, support of the program etc.)
- issues relating to **methods and materials** (textbooks, teaching-learning methodologies, training of trainers etc.)
- issues relating to **motivation and perceptions of literacy** (the perceptions and expectations of the participants, the community, family members, sponsoring bodies, employers etc.)

Note: some problems may fall under more than one of these headings.
Can you identify any other challenges?

This training manual is intended to help you to do your work more effectively. Its aim is to assist you with the task of planning, implementing and managing an adult literacy learning program.

Each reader will use this training manual in their own way, to meet their own concerns. We will all need to work out the implications for ourself in our particular setting, in relation to our own management style, and in the context of our own local communities and the participants in our programs. The material in this manual will need to be adapted to our situation.

CREATING OR ADAPTING A PROGRAM?

In managing our adult literacy learning program, we may on the one hand be free to create an entirely new program. Or we may be more restricted – i.e. have inherited an existing program or be implementing a program (government or NGO) which someone else has already designed.

For the first group, the manual suggests different ways of going about our task. There is no one right way to plan and implement such a program. There will be choices to be made at every stage, possibilities for innovation and being creative, for trying out new approaches, for experimenting.

For the second group, those of us who are implementing someone else's program, using someone else's approach and textbooks, this manual is an opportunity to look at the program we are managing, to examine the assumptions on which it is based, and to consider how it could be different, to try to find ways in which the existing program can be adapted by activities which will help to make it more effective. Because we are tied to an existing program does not mean that we cannot benefit from this guidebook. It will help us to reflect critically on what we are doing, to see if there are any ways in which we can do it more efficiently.

In particular, it will suggest ways in which we can integrate new approaches into our existing program, supplementing the old with some of the newer approaches outlined here. It will show us how the participants and the local community can be involved increasingly in our existing program, how supervisors and facilitators can use the existing program in new ways. We will need to identify for ourself some of the problems we will run into in building up our program, but it is important that we do not feel that – since we are implementing an already established adult literacy learning program – there is nothing we can do to make it more effective. We *can* do something, especially to learn from our experience. This is what this manual sets out to help us to do.

See
3:14-15
7:4

ACTIVITY 1.3:

What is your relationship to your adult literacy learning program:

a) do you have experience or is it all new to you?

b) do you have an existing program or will a new program have to be created?

c) are you free to create it or are you running someone else's program?

Try to answer these questions for yourself. Locate yourself in relation to your adult literacy learning program.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual activity shared in groups (experience of trainees)

4. How Should this Manual be Used?

We see this training manual being used in three main ways.

a) Some **trainers** will use it to train other persons in groups and training courses. For example, national headquarters staff may use it to train district or field staff; or regional groupings of district level managers can use it together in their continuing training programs.

b) Some users of this book will be **trainees**, participants in these training courses. The manual includes a number of activities for such users.

c) Some readers will be using the text independently of any training program, be reading it for their own purposes and at their own pace. In other words, they are **independent readers**.

For the trainers, we have included some indications of training methodologies and teaching-learning material. But this is not a complete day-by-day training program. It does not include the many methods which can be used in such courses. Examples of activities such as ice-breakers or participant summaries at the end/beginning of each day etc., are not included here. For these, trainers will need to go to other sources. There are excellent training manuals in various parts of the world (see **Further Reading** for some suggestions).

On the other hand, the independent readers will be working on their own a great deal more than the trainees. The lack of a group context with its shared experiences may mean that the material in this manual will only make sense to the independent readers if they locate themselves firmly in a particular literacy learning program. For they too need to be active in their learning, not just armchair readers – for example, to visit adult literacy learning programs, local communities (urban and rural), facilitators, supervisors and other managers. This is perhaps the main way they can make the material in this book into experiential learning material.

RAINER:

METHOD: Individual exercise (expectations of trainees)

ACTIVITY 1.4:

You may care to indicate here which group of users of this manual you fall into at the moment –

trainer;

trainee;

or independent reader

You may of course become a member of a different category later; but at the moment, while reading this manual, set down here how you see yourself.

Using the manual for your own purposes: We do not of course envisage that this manual will be used simply as it stands – to be followed unthinkingly and in the same sequence. Although it is based on field tests, we do not wish anyone to be tied to it in its entirety.

For example, **trainers** will need to adapt it to their own training course. Every training context is different, just as every training group is different. The trainer will need to *use* this collection of material in a way which will best suit their context and their own training style.

The **trainees** will normally be guided by their trainer(s) into how this manual should be used in the context of their training programs. Some of the activities outlined in this manual the trainees will undertake on their own; some they will complete in small groups or with the aid of the trainer. Once again, this material is here to be *used*, not to be simply read.

And the **independent readers** too will each use it in their own way. We expect that some readers will vary the sequence in which they use the material, starting with items which particularly concern them (for example, the staffing of adult literacy programs; or setting the objectives; or monitoring and evaluation), and moving backwards and forwards throughout the text as they feel the material will best meet their situation. We welcome this. We have put in the margins cross referencing and labeling to make this process easier. But we hope that by the time that these readers have finished with the text, they will have looked at every section and will have studied more closely those parts which particularly concern them or which are new to them.

See Chap 0
(cross-reference sample)

5. Building the Manual

Structure: In planning this book as both a training course and a guidebook, we have set out twelve sections – this Introduction, then five sections dealing with *devising* our plans, three sections dealing with *implementing* our plans, and three sections dealing with *managing* our program. But you do not need to follow this structure. Start where you are, with matters which most concern you at the moment.

ACTIVITY 1.5:

Make a short list of issues which concern you most at the moment and which sections of this manual apply to these issues. Use the Contents list to help you. You can refer to Activity 1.2 if you wish.

ISSUE	SECTION OF THIS MANUAL

TRAINER:

METHOD: Negotiate the agenda for the training program.

Poster session

Terminology: The manual is intended for use in different countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Adult literacy learning programs in these regions often differ significantly, especially in the terms they use to describe their activities. For example, the learning group leader may be called an animator, a facilitator, a teacher, tutor, promoter, instructor, literacy group leader or some other term. We have chosen terms which we believe will make our sense plain to the biggest number of readers. But we hope that you will replace any of these words with those which you normally use in your own work. Please do not let our language deter you from using this manual.

Key Theme

Key theme: This manual approaches learning adult literacy skills from a different perspective from that usually adopted, and it will be helpful if we could recognize this from the start. We are more concerned to encourage the **use** of literacy skills than simply the **learning** of literacy skills. The aim of our programs is not just to help the participants to *learn* how to read (the primer) or write (the primer exercises). Rather it is to help them to *use* literacy skills in their everyday lives. The success of our programs will be judged, not by how many of the participants finish the training course or pass the test, but by how many of them will be found reading and writing for their own purposes *after* the training program has ended. And as we shall see, we do not believe that it is a question of learning literacy skills first and then using them later; we believe that adult participants learn their literacy skills best through the immediate use of literacy (this is expanded in Chapter 2).

Cross-cutting themes: Throughout every section, there are a number of cross-cutting themes.

a) **learning from experience.** We suggest that the participants in literacy learning programs learn best through experiential methods, by engaging in real literacy tasks, not just the exercises in the primer. Without experience, what is learned will remain all theory. This is true of all adult learning. So, as you work your way through this manual, we shall ask you to use your own experience.

See
3:12-15
7:4-10
Chap 10

b) **participation.** We try at all stages to explore ways to get the local community and the participants in the adult literacy learning programs directly involved in planning, implementing and managing the program. There are many stakeholders in any adult literacy learning program; and we hope that, as you progress through this training experience, you will come to identify more clearly who these stakeholders are for your own programs, to realize the value of including them in your discussions and decision-making, and to find ways of making this possible. It is, after all, not *your* program but theirs. Participatory management is a major thrust of our approach. Helping you to share your task is one of the chief aims of this manual.

c) **adult learning.** The participants in our literacy learning groups are adults, not children. Most learning programs designed for children tend to be made in a planned pre-sequenced linear fashion, from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract, and the learning is then applied later. Adults (and children in their 'outside' learning) tend to learn more through life. Instead of 'learn first, then do', they 'learn through doing'. In other words, they learn **through** their existing daily activities, not **for** their activities; and this means that such learning is not straightforward but 'messy'.

See
2:10-11
6:15
9:9

Traditional approaches to helping adults to learn literacy skills have been based on children's learning programs, but with teaching-learning materials adapted to what others have identified as *adult* needs and interests. That is, learn first through a special textbook, and read and write for real later. Our approach to adults learning literacy is to help them to learn through *doing* their own real literacy activities. We shall explore in several places some of the implications of this approach.

See
Chap
9

d) **contextualized learning.** This fact means that each adult literacy learning program needs to be set into its immediate and individual context. And that will mean that every learning group will engage in different learning activities. It has been well said that

See
4:2-3

> **"Learning and literacy skills are enhanced when the program is contextualized (that is, associated with personal realities) and when it challenges the learners' interpretations of experience through critical discourse". (Mezirow 1996 p118)**

Each group will set different goals for themselves. Even those learning programs which use a common textbook (a decontextualized primer) can supplement this with local literacy materials and tasks chosen by the participants to meet their immediate needs.

One of the things which is becoming increasingly recognized about adult literacy learning programs is that a universalized approach, uniform learning programs using single kinds of teaching-learning materials can no longer meet the very varied needs for literacy of different groups in society. Diversification in adult literacy – as in others fields of education and training – is now a fact of life. Learning literacy is a contextualized activity – it takes place in a particular context and relates to that context.

This will be one of the most difficult things for those who are accustomed to existing approaches to adult literacy teaching to come to terms with; but we believe this is essential if we are to move beyond the existing decontextualized programs and to develop learning programs which are more effective. These approaches are being adopted in many different parts of the world already; and a wider use of them will lead to such programs having greater impact.

See
2:9-12
Chap 10

But managers tend to prefer uniform programs because these make issues of resourcing and monitoring easier. Coping with a large regional or even national program where every learning group is doing a different thing is hard. But it is not impossible. It is done, for example, in income-generating programs where each group chooses its own form of activity. Increasing diversity, not uniformity, is the current aim of many development programs.

See
9:19-22

e) **critical learning.** As we have seen above, literacy skills can best be learned when the adult participants engage in *critical discussion* – not just accepting everything in a literacy textbook (primer) as the truth but testing it against their own experience. The programs we propose in this manual will encourage the participants to engage in the critical use of literacy.

Problems we may face: Managing an innovative adult literacy learning program like this may create a number of issues relating to our own management situation. Barriers will arise, especially from those who are wedded to traditional approaches or from those who may not understand our reasons for working in this way. It will be helpful if, throughout your use of this manual, you could try to identify those points at which problems are likely to arise in your own context, and ask yourself what you plan to do about these problems.

Format: We see each section as a more or less self-contained training session. We start most chapters by asking you to look at your own experience or expectations of the subject under discussion. At the end of each chapter, we list some of the key questions which could form the basis for on-going debate. We do not list the key points being made: our aim is not to tell you how to go about it, but to provoke you to ask yourselves some questions about what you are doing and how you could do it better. You alone know your own situation, your own issues and the resources available to you. We want you to work out your own program, not adopt ours.

JOURNAL ENTRY

Throughout the manual, we shall refer to some items as 'Journal entry'. We suggest that every reader (trainer, trainee or independent reader) keeps their own record of the training program and their own responses to the questions either in a separate journal or on looseleaf pages to be added to this manual. This could be the beginning of a process of keeping our own management journal, to be continued after the end of using this manual.

Working with this manual: The approach to learning literacy skills which we have adopted here stresses two things – that not everything comes from the teacher/facilitator; and secondly, that learning is active, not passive. We want to apply these same two principles to this training manual.

a) **Not everything comes to you from this manual:** This manual is not enough on its own. We want you (the readers of this manual) to add to it the experience you already possess. And we will suggest that you test your views against what you see and hear in the field – to go out to visit classes in your neighborhood, to talk with other literacy workers, etc.

We have provided some **case studies** from Asia, Africa and Latin America, both rural and urban. From time to time, we suggest that you refer to these to look for examples of what is being discussed. But we also recommend that you add to these by writing one or two case studies of your own. To help you, we attach in Appendix B a list of the questions we asked of those who wrote the case studies. The manual is bound in loose-leaf form, so that you can extract items for use and add items to suit your own situation.

See Case Studies

This manual is not a complete exploration of all the issues relating to managing an adult literacy learning program. Our intention is to open doors for you, to encourage you to explore your own work further. As time goes on, you will feel the need for further learning about literacy for yourself, for further help. We have suggested some further reading and sources to help you to continue to develop as you run your own program.

See Chap 12

See Further Reading

b) **Active learning:** Throughout the text, we have put in some Activity boxes. It is very tempting to slide over these and to read on without interrupting the flow of the argument by writing in these boxes. But if we are going to get the most value out of this manual, we suggest that every now and again we should pause and relate the material being discussed to our own experience. That is the purpose of these boxes – to give us time to reflect and apply the content to our own work. Most of them are very short, just the writing of a sentence or two. If you do not wish to write on these pages, we suggest that you could write on separate pages and add these to the folder.

6. Feedback

For any training program to be effective, some feedback will be necessary. Therefore, feedback in relation to this training manual will also be important.

Mentor: One useful way in which feedback may be obtained is through identifying some friend or colleague who will serve as a critical friend or 'mentor'. It need not be someone who is very knowledgeable about adult literacy but it should be someone we know reasonably well and who we know is interested; someone with whom we can discuss the text of this manual and how to adapt it to our own particular context. It could be a senior level manager, another trainer, another staff member, a friend in another NGO or department etc. It is always useful to get a second opinion; and if you get to a section which you are finding it hard to understand or to see how to relate it to your own situation, to have someone to discuss it with will be particularly helpful. Again, in relation to the writing activities in this manual, you could run your written comments past someone else to get their views about them. Learning from and with one's peers is a helpful and effective way to learn.

ACTIVITY 1.6:

We suggest that you write down here the names of one or two persons you wish to use as "mentors" while you are using this manual.

See 8:14-15

Networks of training and support: The context in which such a training manual as this can be most effective is one which is supported by a network of adult literacy workers and mentors. We see such networks operating at three levels:

See 3:14

a) ***at the level of the training program:*** We believe that it will be useful if every training program could build for itself a network of supporters – people chosen on the basis of personal friendship who can provide feedback to the trainer(s) and trainees. Just as the village or urban adult literacy learning program is best if it is supported by a local community group, so too a training program would become more effective if there is some support group to assist it with its work.

b) ***at the regional or national or country level:*** We believe it will be of great value if every country can build up a national network of adult literacy 'mentors' who can reflect critically on the experience of helping adults with their literacy practices in that country; who can share their experiences and learn from each other, who can provide feedback to the more local networks. This training manual can become part of the resources for this kind of support for adult literacy teaching.

c) ***at the international level:*** Such national networks need their own feedback systems – including some training facilities and on-going support. Save the Children (US), which is one of the joint sponsors of this training manual, has in its country offices staff who can either provide feedback or identify other people who can provide that feedback. And in its international headquarters, there are staff dealing with educational matters who can provide advice, through networking with their country offices. The Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts also has staff expert in this field, and has extensive international networks with individuals and agencies who could help in this work, such as the International Council for Adult Education which has an International Literacy Support Scheme. Education for Development, a development agency based in the UK, has been using the approaches suggested in this manual in developing countries for many years. Those who wish to pursue this are invited to contact these organizations. Their addresses are on the final Evaluation page.

Key Questions—Chapter 1

Before each of us starts this training program, we need to ask ourselves individually:

What are my relations with
- the local adult literacy centers;
- my senior managers?

Am I free to develop a new program or to change an existing one;
or am I obliged to run somebody else's program?

Looking at the list of contents, which subject is of greatest interest to me at the moment? What is my biggest problem, my main concern?
Where shall I start in this manual?

What kind of support network do I have?

Part ONE

Planning the Program

In the first part of this training program, we look at the planning of our adult literacy learning program. To do this, we suggest that we could consider the following questions:

- What kind of literacy for adults are we trying to promote through our literacy learning program? (chapter 2)
- What kind of participant group will we work with? Where will the adult literacy learners come from? (chapter 3)
- What kind(s) of teaching-learning approaches will be used in our adult literacy learning program? (chapter 4)
- How will we determine whether our program will be successful or not? (chapter 5)
- How can we ensure that our goals and the goals of the participants match? (chapter 6)

You do not of course have to use each of these sections in sequence – you can start where you feel you have most interest. But when you have worked through the whole of this planning process, we will propose that you evaluate your learning and the decisions you have taken.

Throughout the training program, we will suggest that you try to find ways to share your planning process with the other stakeholders rather than do everything yourself. This will help to ensure that the program is more relevant and therefore more effective.

For those engaged in a more formal training program, we estimate that, in a five days' course, with three main training sessions each day, this first part will take two days (see Appendix A).

Defining the Task: What Do We Mean by Literacy?

This training session will examine

- *what we mean by literacy*
- *the fact that there are different kinds of literacies*
- *the importance of literacy activities in daily life*
- *literacy tasks and literacy texts*
- *and how adults learn while engaging in their own literacies.*

Few of us who use this manual have ever experienced what it means to be illiterate. Even when we have visited countries with a different language and script, we still look at these scripts and texts with an understanding that they mean something and can be deciphered. It is therefore hard for us to understand what it means to be living in our own society and to be unable to decode the symbols which some other people seem to decode easily.

But we all use literacy. And this is where we need to start when we look at adult literacy learning programs – what literacy is and how we use it.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
Poster session

ACTIVITY 2.1:

List here some of the recent literacy activities you have engaged in – some reading and writing tasks which you have undertaken.

1. The Importance of Literacy

Most adult literacy programs start by emphasizing the fact that literacy is important in today's world. But we need to ask, 'important to whom?' The value of literacy will vary according to who is talking about it.

ACTIVITY 2.2:

Think about some of the ways in which literacy is important to the following persons or bodies:

a) the government: why do they wish to increase the uses of literacy?

b) development agencies: why do they wish to develop literacy skills in the community?

c) commercial agencies: why would they wish to see more people reading and writing?

d) villagers and urban dwellers: why would they wish to increase or improve their literacy activities?

Can you think of any other persons or groups who would find it important for community members to have useful literacy skills?

RAINER:

METHOD: Socio-drama or role play: summary notes in journals after the exercises

It is however very important that we do not exaggerate the difficulties of persons being non-literate, or the benefits of developing literacy skills. Many people (both men and women) are able to live full, rewarding and rich lives without literacy skills; and again, having literacy skills does not mean that every problem will be solved (for example, that literate persons will no longer be cheated). Many of us can think of people we know who either are non-literate but living satisfying lives, or who have literacy skills but do not always use them effectively. *See if you can think of any in your own experience.*

We are not saying that literacy activities are not important. We are saying that the importance of literacy is not universal but depends on the person(s) engaged in the literacy activity and on the context in which the literacy activity takes place.

2. Literacy and Living

Literacy activities are part of the process of living our daily lives. They form part of our **communication activities** with others. Every one of us, literate and non-literate alike, find ourselves faced with some literacy **tasks** we wish to perform, with some **texts** we need to read or create.

The theme of this manual is that adults will learn literacy skills best through using these daily literacy activities, these tasks and texts, in real life rather than through using only a textbook (primer) in a classroom.

2.1 LITERACY IN COMMUNICATION

Literacy is part of communication between people and between agencies. Communication can take many forms - visual (i.e. using signs and symbols or color schemes), non-verbal (i.e. using signs we may make with our hands or other parts of our bodies), artefactual (i.e. using things we design or place strategically to make statements), oral (i.e. using speech) or literate (i.e. using written texts of some kind or other) etc. Many forms of communication combine different elements.

All of us engage in communication every day of life. And all of us, *including non-literate persons*, engage in literate communications. Non-literate people like others use texts, that is, they receive or send textual communications: they fill in forms, they pay bills. They may get someone else to write the text or read it for them, but they are not excluded from literate communication.

Here we may note four main kinds of communications which use written texts:

a) **individual** – we make and use some kinds of texts for our own purposes, to communicate with ourselves (e.g. in the form of reminder notes)

b) **family and household** – communications in the home between members of the household

c) **community and social communications**

d) **work-based communications.**

Can you think of any other kinds of communication which use written or printed texts?

ACTIVITY 2.3:

Look at the literacy activities you have listed above (Activity 2.1) and see if you can identify which of them are

a) ***personal*** (i.e. you did it on your own, like reading a magazine or newspaper or writing a diary)

b) ***family*** (e.g. leaving a note for another member of the family or writing a shopping list or receiving a school communication etc)

c) ***community or social*** (e.g. a religious literacy or some group you belong to, or political)

d) ***work-based*** (i.e. related to your main occupation, like reading a notice at work or instructions about work or an advertisement for a job etc)

e) ***any others?***

Note: it may not always be easy to distinguish between the categories, as they often overlap.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual activities shared in small group work

2.2 LITERACY TASKS

Among those who are writing about literacy today, it has become normal to refer to **literacy events** as the different acts of reading and/or writing which we all engage in (for example, making a daily entry in a diary or journal), and **literacy practices** to refer to the way in which we do such acts, the customary patterns of literacy activities which different societies and different groups in every society adopt (for example, some people who keep a diary write it up at night, others in the morning or at some other time). This is helpful, but it concentrates too much on the actual acts of reading or writing; it may leave out all those literacy activities which non-literate persons engage in, using their own strategies.

The best way then to think about literacy in any community is in terms of **literacy tasks**. All of us engage (or wish to engage) in some form of literacy tasks – in our daily lives in the home, in the community, at work and especially during special events such as births, deaths, marriages, festivals and holidays etc. We engage in some of them very easily, because we are used to them and feel confident about them; we engage in others with a feeling of being uncomfortable, and frequently get other persons to help us.

See
2:13-14

Local literacies: Literacy then is a 'situated' activity. It takes place in a particular place at a particular time for a particular purpose. There are many different kinds of literacies, just as there are many different contexts in which literacy tasks take place. The form of literacy tasks which are used in existing adult literacy learning programs are 'school-based literacies' – they consist of working through textbooks or other formal learning materials with the hope that this can then be applied to other community literacies. But it is not easy to transfer school-based literacies into, for example, religious literacies or commercial literacies (for this, see Street 1984). That is the key problem we face; how to help people with their **real** community literacies.

2.3 LITERACY MATERIALS (TEXTS)

See
Chap
9

All literacy activities depend on texts. All around us, we can find texts of some kind – printed or handwritten.

We can divide these texts into three main groups:

a) **found texts**

b) **brought-in texts**

c) **created texts.**

a) **Found texts:** These are texts which already exist in our homes and communities – things like calendars or post-office forms or packets on food in the shops or writing on the walls or election posters etc.

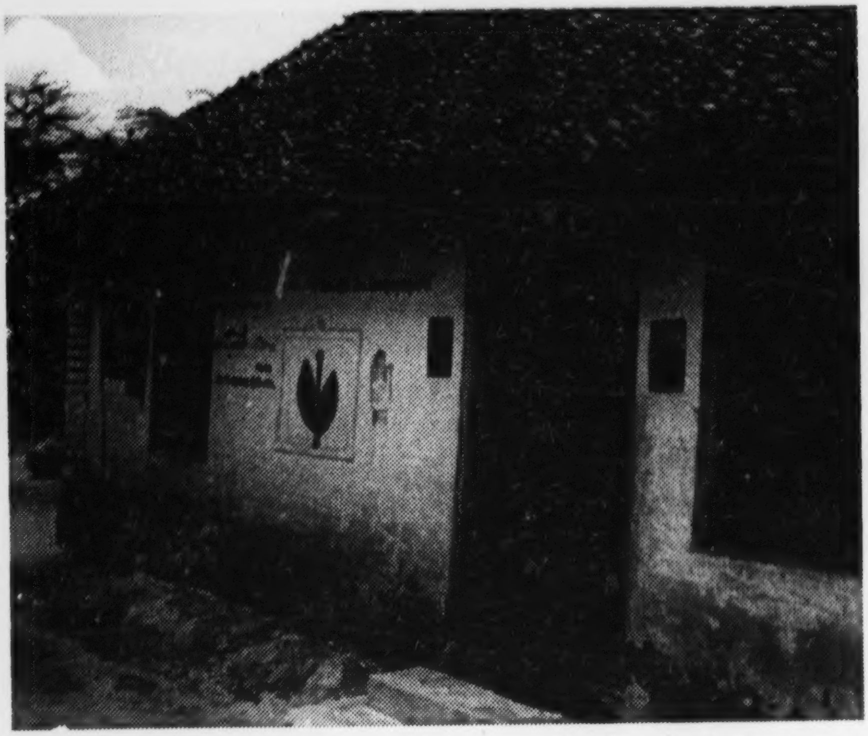
It is often said that villages in developing countries do not have any texts in them for the villagers to use. But a careful look at these villages will often reveal that there are a number of 'found texts' in them already. This has been found in detailed surveys which have been made in communities as far apart as Sierra Leone and Nigeria in Africa, Bangladesh and the Philippines in Asia, and Guatemala in Latin America.

b) **Brought-in texts:** There will however be some texts which we may expect to find in the locality but which are not there naturally. These are items which people in the area find useful for their own purposes or interesting to read and use. These can be brought in to the local community. School textbooks are an example of brought-in texts, but so are newspapers and magazines, or government forms, or extension leaflets etc. For many people, bills arrive to be paid. In some communities, one kind of text may exist as a found text; in other communities, the same text would need to be brought in.

c) **Created texts:** These are the texts we all make in the course of our daily living. We write notes to ourselves or to other people, or shopping lists; we keep accounts. We write on our calendar or in our diary to remind us and other members of our family of some coming event. At work, we may need to keep records of work done. In the family, we may have to send a note to the school with the children, or write a message to a family member who is away. If we are a member of a group, there are notes of group meetings and other paper-work to be done in connection with the activities of that group. There are many kinds of created texts.

Sometimes, our literacy tasks will combine two of these kinds of texts. For example, to get a loan or a license, we will usually have to fill in a form. This may be either already existing in the community or specially fetched-in; and it is a text for writing as well as for reading. A form is then both a found or brought-in text *and* a created text – we both read it and write it.

See
9:6



Example of found texts in India. Note mixture of writing and drawing. Alan Rogers

RAINER:

METHOD: Individual work, then shared in small groups

ACTIVITY 2.4:

IDENTIFYING LITERACY TASKS AND LITERACY TEXTS.

We have provided a table for you to complete. Look again at Activity 2.3 to see if you can identify texts which are found, brought in or created.

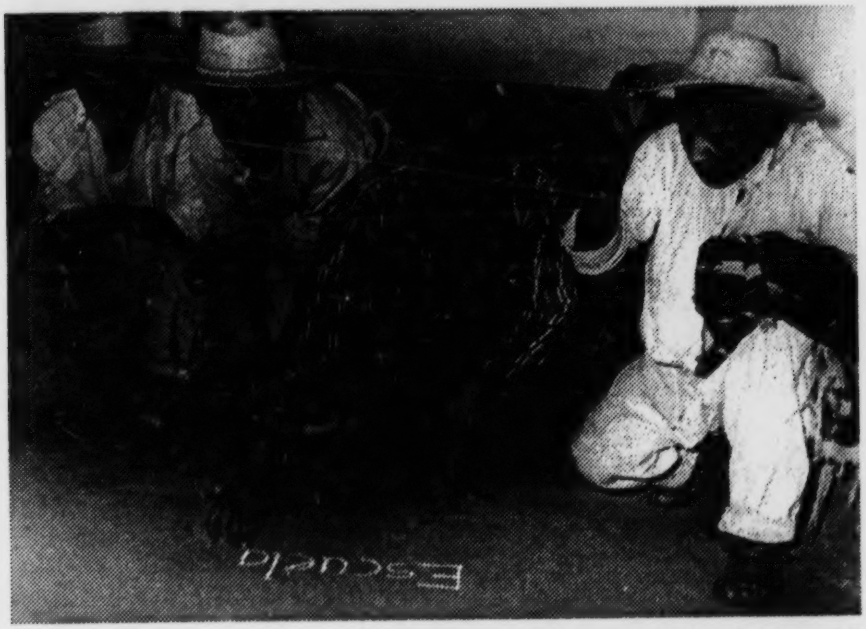
TASKS	TEXTS (found, brought-in, created)
Personal literacy tasks	
Family literacy tasks	
Community/social literacy tasks	
Work-based literacy tasks	

3. Using Literacy Tasks for Learning Literacy Skills

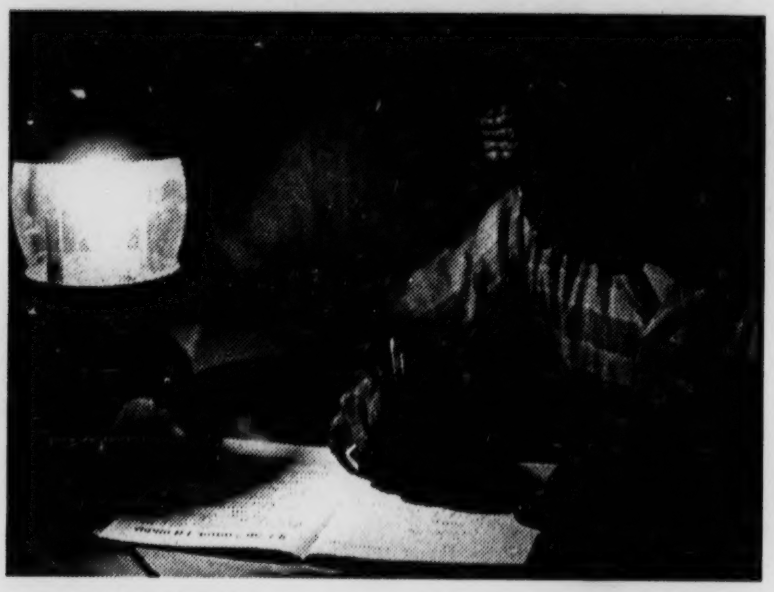
Almost all people agree that an adult literacy learning program is intended to help people with their real-life literacies – to cope with **their** literacy tasks and the texts on which these tasks are based. As we have seen, non-literate people already encounter real literacy texts and undertake real literacy tasks. Our learning program then is not the *start* of something which they do not already do. Rather, like many other forms of development activity such as nutrition and farming, it is an intervention in their lives to help them to do more effectively some activity they are already doing and wish to do more effectively.

3.1) Traditional approaches: Until very recently, the normal way in which such a literacy intervention was made was through a program designed to help the participants to learn literacy skills in a decontextualised way from textbooks in a formal adult literacy class. The aim was to learn such skills first and then later to apply those skills. There are many reasons for this. First, the model is drawn from primary schools – that is the way many children learn literacy skills in school and it is felt that that is the way all persons learn literacy skills. Secondly, building literacy learning programs which are based on the localized literacy tasks of the participants – not on what other people *think* are those tasks but on what the participants themselves *say* are their own tasks – is not an easy thing for managers to do. Some managers are engaged on large-scale programs with hundreds of centers and thousands of participants. Both practically and ideologically, they and their senior managers often find themselves reluctant to commit themselves to a highly contextualised and diversified adult literacy learning program.

See
1:9-10



'Literacy" is usually seen as education ('school') rather than as helping adults with their social and occupational tasks. Mexico.
UNESCO/J. S. Bach



Learning literacy through a real literacy task. Ecuador.
UNESCO/Dominique Roger

However, it is becoming widely recognized that such generalized programs with centrally prepared teaching-learning materials have been largely ineffective – and they continue to be ineffective. And thus everywhere, there is a search for new approaches to helping adults to learn and develop their literacy skills.

One of the main reasons which has been identified in many different places for this relative lack of success is that such programs rarely help the participants to transfer the school-based literacy they learn in the adult literacy class into daily use in their lives. The numbers of persons who become able to use literacy skills fluently and regularly through such formal adult literacy classes are on the whole small. And (it is argued) without such *use* of literacy skills, literacy will bring no real gains, no improvement in the quality of the lives of the participants and the communities in which they live:

See 1:8

> **...it is not the *learning* of literacy skills which brings about economic and social development but the *use* of literacy skills in real situations...to achieve their own goals which will bring whatever benefit literacy can bring to the participants and their communities." (Rogers et al 1999 p80)**

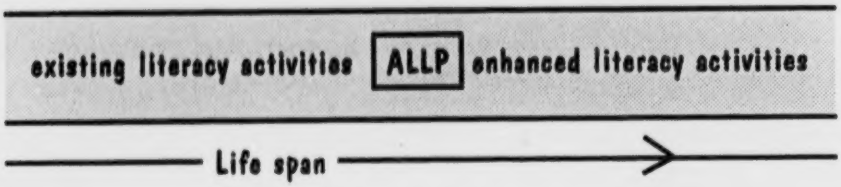
It can then be argued that the aim of our adult literacy learning programs is not just to help people to *learn* literacy skills but to help them to *use* literacy for their own chosen life-enhancing purposes.

See 4:2-3

See 6:15 9:9

3.2) The experiential approach: So a number of alternative approaches to adult literacy learning programs have grown up and are being used in various parts of the developing world. In most of these, the learning program is based – at least in part – on the real literacy tasks which the participants engage in or which they wish to engage in. Our understandings of adult learning show that many people learn best, not through special decontextualized learning programs in a classroom but through those normal activities which they undertake in their everyday lives. They learn cooking by cooking for real; they learn to be parents by being parents; they learn farming or fishing by farming or fishing in their lives, not by attending courses on these subjects. So too they learn literacy skills through the real literacy tasks they already engage in during their lives, through the real texts which they encounter in the course of their lived experiences.

FIG 2.1: RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT LITERACY LEARNING PROGRAM (ALLP) TO LITERACY TASKS OF PARTICIPANTS.



The experiential approach to learning then is based on localized literacy activities rather than on a common textbook. For some practitioners urge that the best way to help the participants to use what they learn in the classroom in daily life is to bring the real literacy activities of the particular community *into* the learning group rather than trying to take school-based literacy activities (the primer exercises) *out* into daily life.

See
9:10-12
4:4

3.3 The critical approach: It has however been suggested that to use existing real literacy activities as the basis for learning literacy skills will not lead to developmental change, to social transformation. This is arguably true. But we are not suggesting that the group should use local literacy tasks and local texts without thinking deeply about them. We have seen above that "learning and literacy skills are enhanced when the program .. challenges the learner's interpretations of experience through critical discourse". And we shall see later how a critical approach can be taken to every text (including the literacy primer itself) which the literacy learner uses (for a fuller discussion, see chapter 9).

Choice: We have then a choice to make – between using a traditional school-based approach, an experiential approach using real literacy tasks and texts, or a critical approach, looking at every text to see the power relationships which underlie it. Each of these has advantages and each of them has its own set of problems. The key decision seems to be between a universalized general approach to learning literacy using a common learning text in the dominant or school-based literacy, or a more localized (contextualized) learning program, with local texts chosen by the facilitator and participants for learning. Or it may be that a combination of both approaches is possible.

To a large extent, the decision will be easy if we work with existing developmental groups – for their purpose will be to further the work of their group; and they will wish to use their own texts for this purpose. A more complex choice faces us when we develop programs which set up new literacy learning classes, for we may then be under pressure to use a traditional primer rather than the real literacy tasks and texts of the participants.

See
3:4

This is the single most important decision we shall have to make. Shall we use the existing literacy tasks and texts of the participants as the basis of the learning program or shall we use our own literacy tasks and texts (a primer) instead? Or perhaps we can decide to use a mixture of both approaches. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9 below. Our aim is to help local people with **their** literacy activities. We can do this either by asking them to join our literacy activities first before they deal with their own, or we can help them directly with their own literacy tasks and texts.

Managing a localized literacy learning program: While the use of universalized programs seems to be rather discredited because of their high failure rate, if we decide to use a more experiential approach, we are still faced with the practical problem, how to run a localized and diversified literacy learning program on a large scale. There is growing interest in this. For example, the Indian Total Literacy Campaign is locally diversified, although in every District a common learning program is pursued. But although this already happens in the case of income-generation programs (where each local group chooses which kind of income generating activity they wish to do), to allow the same choice in adult literacy learning programs for some reason is often not felt to be possible: adults (so it is thought) need a uniform learning program. We hope this manual will suggest some ways in which a localized learning program can be built up and managed, ways in which the large-scale can be interpreted locally.

See
1:9-10

See Chaps
3,6,10

Key Theme

We shall discuss this in more depth later; but here we would reiterate our view that the aim of all adult literacy learning programs is to provide assistance to the participants *with the literacy tasks which they wish to do more confidently and more independently.* All of our participants will have literacy tasks they engage in or wish to engage in as part of their processes of communication with other people. Our aim is to help them to identify these tasks and to assist them with the performance of these tasks – to help people to use local texts (found, brought-in and created) more effectively and in this way to improve the quality of their lives.

RAINER:

METHOD: Small group or poster session

ACTIVITY 2.5:

Choose two or three existing literacy tasks which you think your participant group already engage in and suggest how these can form the basis for learning literacy skills.

4. Surveying the Literacy Context

If we are to use the existing literacy tasks and texts of the participants in our learning programs to help them to learn, it follows that we need to survey the kinds of different literacy activities which are going on in the local communities where our program is located. The first task of any manager of an adult literacy learning program is to review carefully the immediate literacy context.

4.1 LITERACY-IN-USE

Studies of literacy in context have revealed many features of literacy-in-use.

Literacies, not literacy: First, we have already seen that there is not just one universal literacy but several different literacies. For example, there are *religious* literacies: some people can read their sacred texts (such as the Koran) but cannot read a local newspaper. Many shopkeepers and some householders have developed their own *commercial* (or what some people call economic) literacies – they keep some written record of the transactions they are engaged in but again cannot cope with a government form in the standardised language (see Street 1984 for this). The kind of literacy taught in an adult literacy class (sometimes called a *school-based* literacy) is not only different from some local literacies but it asserts its superiority over all other forms of literacy. It demeans (and often denies the existence of) these other literacies. It claims to be **the dominant literacy**.

But even with the school-based literacy, there are different uses to which it is put. People use the dominant literacy for all kinds of purposes in their own lives. There are *traditional* uses of this kind of literacy which already exist in the communities, and there are *new* uses of literacy which development agencies, governments, employers and commercial interests wish to promote (for example, using extension material, receiving government messages, accepting instructions, or reading advertisements, books and magazines). We can distinguish between these by calling the first 'instrumental' literacy (doing existing literacy tasks but not changing anything), and the second (using UNESCO terminology) 'functional' literacy (doing new literacy tasks, especially approved vocational and developmental tasks). It has been suggested that adult literacy learning programs seem to be most effective when they start with helping adults with their traditional instrumental uses of literacy before moving on to the new functional uses of literacy.

A public letter writer in Morocco.
UNESCO/Dominique Roger

Literacy and power: Literacy is always connected with power and authority, in the community, in the workplace, in the home; and helping people with their literacy practices will always at some point create pressure on the existing power relationships within the local community. The language and the kind of 'voice' (that is, the standardized and 'polite' forms of communication used in most official texts as compared with other more local and vernacular modes of communication) which are normally used in the found texts, the way these texts are distributed, the expectations of different members of the community as to the literacy activities of other members – all of these will indicate power relations. Who does what, where and when are all constructed by the local community and its elites. The kind of literacy promoted through adult literacy learning programs will tend to be the dominant kind of literacy in the country or region; it will seek to become universal and to exclude other forms of literacy. As Freire continually pointed out, literacy (in practice and in learning) is not neutral; it will always either support the existing power structures and practices or seek to subvert these. An instrumental literacy learning program built on existing real literacies will need to help the participants to become critically aware of these power dimensions to literacy.

Power in surveys: We need to examine carefully what kind of communities the participants in our programs live in. But there is an important issue here. On the one hand, a survey can be undertaken to help us to determine what kind of program we should provide **for** the participants (this is sometimes called the 'power over' model). On the other hand, a survey can be undertaken to help us to find out what the participants wish to do and to join with them to create such programs **with** them (the 'power with' model). *We may need to consider our* *own role and what power we have in developing and managing literacy learning programs.*

4.2 MAKING THE SURVEY

We are not going to outline here methods of participatory research, for there are other guides to this (see **Further Reading**). But we do wish to stress that such surveys are best undertaken with and through the local community who know what literacies are relevant to their own local community rather than by outside researchers alone.

Some of the issues to be included in such local surveys would seem to be as follows.

Literacy communities: recent studies of literacy in the Philippines have drawn attention to the fact that different literacy communities exist side by side. Some communities have very few literacy practices in them; others nearby have many. Further studies have also revealed that there are 'literate families' and 'non-literate families' – families which have a high access to literacy skills and many literacy activities, and families which do not. The same is true of work places. Some occupations have many literacies in them, others very little. Any literacy learning program will need to take account of these differences.

Situated literacies: again recent research has revealed that literacy is different for different groups. The literacy activities of taxi drivers (for example) are different from the literacy activities of hospital porters (for example). To ask both groups to leave their occupations and to learn literacy skills through an exactly similar and generalized learning program will not meet their different needs. They need specific learning programs to suit their situations. We want to argue that adult participants will need to learn literacy skills not so much through a common literacy learning program devised centrally as from their own different life activities.

Language: the language issue is a major one, especially in areas where more than one language is used for communication. For example, is the language to be chosen for the literacy learning program the one which is used in speech (even if there are few texts in that language) or a more standardized language? The approach which we are recommending, one which starts with the real literacy tasks to be found in any community, suggests that the language to be used in the adult literacy learning program (at least at the start) is the language in which the existing literacy tasks in that community are expressed. That is why in one program in South Africa (see Case Study), two languages are used *from the start* – for to write a letter in that country, one needs to use the local language for the text of the letter and English for the address of the letter. One cannot fulfil the literacy task (communicating through a letter) without learning to read and write in both languages. In this sense, government and community literacies may be

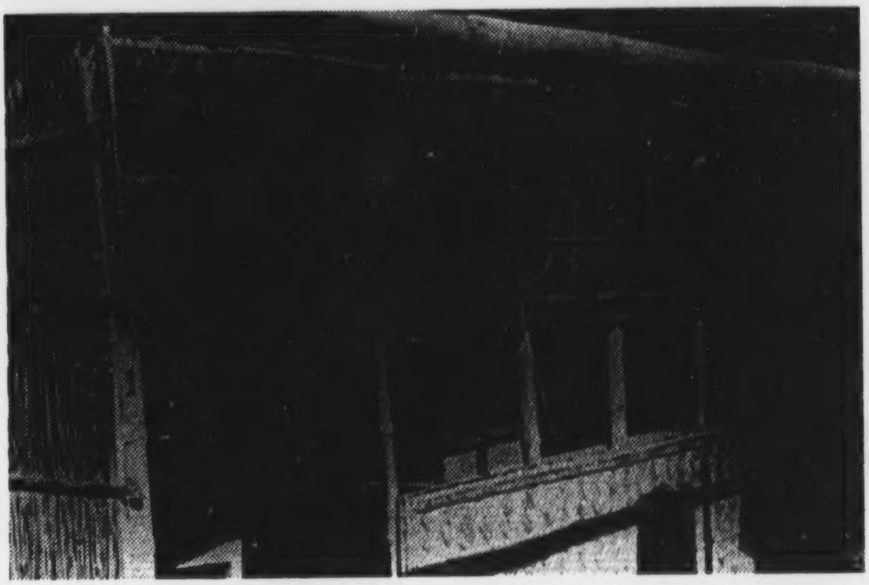
Using two languages in a literacy class, Nepal
Anna Robinson-Pant

different (see Aikman 1999 for an example of this).

Special events: literacy activities tend also to cluster round specific activities, the special events which punctuate people's lives: weddings, births and deaths, markets and festivals etc. They are not spread out evenly during the year. Travel will often result in increased literacy activities. And unexpected happenings such as floods or drought, local fires and violence, or outbreaks of violence or diseases such as malaria will all create demands for literacy tasks to be fulfilled. Such events can form the basis of opportunities for adult literacy learning.

Gender: literacy practices are gendered practices.. This of course varies from context to context, but at work and especially in the home, males and females are usually expected to undertake different literacy tasks. The gender aspect of adult literacy learning has been accepted for many years, but learning programs for women have been built on *generalized* approaches to women's and men's literacy – what some people in central locations think all women and all men are concerned with. We need to see what is really happening in our communities, what literacies different men and women really do do, not to generalize on the way we feel men and women think and act differently.

Age: again, there are often different expectations about the kinds of literacy activities which different aged members of the community engage in. Young people and older people often engage in different literacy tasks. And we need to avoid generalizations that *all* older persons and *all* young persons do the same things. We need to look carefully at what actually happens in the local community in which our program is located.



A literacy focal point, Bangladesh village (note use of two languages). Alan Rogers

Minority groups: In many areas, minority groups have excluded themselves from the literate community or more frequently have been excluded by others. They have found other strategies to cope with literacy tasks. Again, we need to see what literacy tasks they undertake and how they do these tasks, and also the tasks they wish to undertake. As recent studies in Peru show (Aikman 1999), they may engage in literacy practices different from the dominant group, not just in different strategies to undertake the same literacy tasks. We need as far as possible to involve these groups in determining what tasks they use literacy for and how they do those tasks. Their intentions can form the basis of the adult learning program.

Focal literacy points: In every community, there will be focal points in which literacy activities are concentrated – the clinic or school, the police station or post office, the shop or church/temple/mosque, existing community groups, the village community or administrative center etc. Most of these use dominant literacies, but some will include more local literacies as well. Part of the aim of our learning program is to make these centers more accessible to our participants.

There are of course other aspects of looking at local literacies (see Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al 2000)); but the above would provide a starting point.

The problem with surveys: Some may argue that the manager of any adult literacy learning program cannot engage in such detailed local investigations in each of the local communities they plan to work in. On the face of it, that is a valid objection to this approach of using contextualized and localized literacy. The answer however is that the managers have considerable assistance in this task. They are not alone. Not only are there guidebooks on how to make such surveys (see Fordham et al 1995 and **Further Reading**). Not only are there the supervisors and facilitators to engage more directly in this task (training for this kind of survey work needs to be built into the training programs of both of these staff). Not only are there the participants themselves once they have been assembled; the importance of participatory forms of local surveys such as PRA is well known in development today. In addition, there is the local community itself – the members of existing group, the employers in work-based learning programs, and the community for new groups. It is possible to use PRA approaches to discover the existing literacy activities and attitudes towards literacy in the community as a whole.

See 3:13

ACTIVITY 2.6:

Make a survey of literacy in a local community.

This can take one of several forms. For example, you can take one local community near you and write some notes about the literacy activities you can see in it, looking at language, gender, age and minority-majority issues, focal points (including the school), existing community groups. Make careful notes of this information and if possible collect or copy some of the texts you find: we shall refer to these later in this manual. You will need to visit that locality; it will be useful to take a camera to record the found texts and literacy activities in the community.

An alternative activity is to write up the literacy activities of an individual (a life history), a family or a community group. Or you can make a study of the literacy activities that go on in one or more of the local focal points over a period of time.

Method: field visit and reports with photographs if possible.

Key Questions—Chapter 2

When choosing the kind of literacy we aim to promote, we need to ask ourselves:

What kinds of literacy tasks do the participants want to do?

- in their family lives?
- in their particular community/social lives?
- in their occupations?
- for their own personal purposes?

What kinds of texts can we identify in the local community?

- found texts (already existing)?
- brought-in texts (existing but not yet in the local community)?
- created texts (texts written by members of the local community)?

How can we best help our participants to do these tasks and to use these texts?

- through a standardized literacy learning program?
- through a localized literacy learning program?
- through a combination of both approaches?

Chapter 3

Choosing the Learning Group

This section deals with finding and recruiting the literacy learners. It

- *suggests there are many different learning contexts for adult literacy learning programs*
- *presents a typology of such contexts of learning groups*
- *notes the need to identify with the participants themselves their immediate concerns and interests*
- *and draws attention to the stakeholders in such programs.*

1. Many Different Learning Programs

The first element of planning of an adult literacy learning program is to find the literacy learners.

See 1:9

We need to stress first that we are dealing here with literacy learning programs for **adults**. The development of literacy skills with children, whether in formal or non-formal educational programs, would seem to differ significantly from adult learning processes, and this is not dealt with in this manual.

See Chap 2

There are many different approaches to helping adults to learn and develop their literacy skills. The number of approaches and the number of different contexts are increasing rapidly. Today is a time of experimentation and indeed excitement in the promotion of literacy skills among adults. New forms of activity will almost certainly continue to emerge as the impact of new understandings of literacy itself make themselves felt. We will outline some of the main ways in which such programs have been provided, but it will be important for you to decide for yourself which planning approach to adopt.

Key Theme

The fact that *there is no one right way of organizing literacy learning programs* means that the key elements are

See 1:4-5

a) **choice:** we all need to choose what to do in our particular situation. And we will need to determine how that decision will be made – whether by ourselves (with our colleagues) or in association with a wider group of interested parties. If (as we have seen) you are not in a position to make such decisions but are required to implement an already planned learning program, then you will be able to review your program to see which kind of approach it has been decided will be implemented.

b) **experiment:** we need to try out new ways of helping adults with their many different literacy activities, to develop and monitor innovative approaches. And we should not give up too quickly if these innovations do not succeed the first time. If we thought it was right to try a new approach once, it probably is still right to try it.

2. Different Learning Contexts

People learn their literacy skills in many different contexts. (Indeed, we know from some recent research that in many countries a significant number of adults learn literacy skills without going to primary school or to an adult literacy class; they learn "on the job", from their life context).

Adult classes: the dominant model of adult literacy learning programs: In many developing countries, the "normal" provision is a relatively formal literacy learning program, with a set number of "learners", a set period of time, a set format with a facilitator, and set teaching-learning materials (a textbook or literacy primer in the dominant literacy). This model has been drawn from primary school and has been the preferred model promoted by international agencies such as UNESCO. It is based on the belief that once the literacy learners have learned to read the literacy primer and learned to write the primer exercises, they can read anything and write anything. It is a 'single injection' model of learning literacy skills – one short sharp training program which will solve for all time the deficit of lack of literacy skills.

But this is not the only model. A closer examination of the field reveals that there are different kinds of learning groups, different contexts within which the learning of literacy skills is now taking place.

ACTIVITY 3.1:

Look at the case studies at the end of this training manual; try to identify some of the different kinds of literacy groups revealed by these examples.
Make a brief list here. You can add to these some case studies of your own.

TRAINER:

METHOD: small groups take one case study and report back

DIFFERENT LEARNING GROUPS

We can list some of the different literacy learning contexts as follows:

1. **Special contexts –** such as refugees or issue-based contexts

2. **Development groups –** such as community groups, special interest/task groups, work-based programs, school-based groups, vocational training groups or other kinds of development groups (health, legal literacy etc).

3. **Newly established literacy learning groups** (classes) which may be either demand-led groups or supply-led 'classes'.

Add any others you can think of.

1. Special contexts: for example,

a) ***refugee programs:*** Emergency education can now be found in every continent. Some such programs are described in Archer and Costello 1990.

b) ***issue-based programs:*** some literacy learning programs are tied to major social or political changes (e.g. Nicaragua or Cuba). A recent one was the Namibian adult literacy program. Other issue-based programs are related to environmental concerns or AIDS or women's development (gender equality) etc.

2. Building on development or other existing groups:

A number of adult literacy learning programs are built on groups which already exist and which have an activity other than literacy learning as the basis for their existence. We can see at least six different kinds of such groups:

a) ***community groups:*** some of these are 'community-based organisations' — that is, groups which the people have organized for themselves (in this, they differ from welfare NGOs which are groups organized by other people to help the poor and needy). Local residents' groups and religious groupings are examples of such groups. Many of these encourage the learning of literacy (and other) skills to help their members to engage in the activities of the group (e.g. to read and use religious material or to engage in social action activities).

b) ***special interest or task groups:*** these are groups of people who have come together for a specific purpose which is not literacy related. In Banda, India, a group of women came together to learn how to repair and maintain water handpumps; and they found themselves learning literacy skills in order to help them with their chosen task (Nirantar 1997). In South Africa, groups of older women, meeting for mutual support through the agency Help the Aged, again began to develop their literacy skills (see Case Study). In other countries, groups organized by bodies such as the Scouts also engage in literacy learning programs. Their main purpose is some other task; literacy learning is a by-product of this task, not the primary activity of the group.

c) ***work-based groups:*** literacy learning through the work-place is growing rapidly. Groups of workers meet, either voluntarily or on the instructions of the employing managers, to learn literacy skills. These learning programs are very specific; they take place in and learn from the work processes in factories like the Botswana Power Corporation (see Case Study), or through the immediate literacy requirements of specific occupational groupings such as taxidrivers in South Africa (Prinsloo et al 1996).

d) ***school-based and family groups***, such as pupil-parent or parent-teacher groups. Family literacy learning programs (pre-school and inter-generational) are a growth area, adults learning from and at the same time encouraging children's learning.

e) ***vocational training groups***, such as groups aiming to set up small businesses or groups of farmers learning and developing their skills of farming. In Sri Lanka and Indonesia (see Case Study), farmers learning about pest control are also learning literacy skills through the agricultural texts they are studying. In Nepal, women's sewing groups are learning literacy skills through the sewing pattern books.

See
9:11

f) ***groups formed to engage in other development activities.*** In India, a women's group created to develop awareness of legal rights helped the field workers to develop literacy skills. In Bangladesh, women's credit and savings groups use these activities to learn literacy skills. In Nepal (and in other countries), women's health groups link learning health to literacy skills (see Case Study). In many countries, groups established to explore development projects for their own villages or urban areas through using PRA (participatory rural/rapid appraisal) techniques also engage in learning literacy skills (e.g. REFLECT projects–see **Further Reading**).

Other kinds of already existing groups are learning literacy skills while engaging on their primary activity or task using their own literacy practices. *See if you can identify some of these.*

Characteristics of existing groups: The characteristics of such groups in general are as follows:

- they already have a meeting place, an agreed format of meetings, and their own structures. And they have a set membership, so that decisions about the participants (e.g. whether to have single or mixed gender groups) have already been taken.
- the membership of such groups is almost always *heterogeneous* – that is, they are made up of people with mixed literacy competences. Some members can read and write dominant literacy texts reasonably well, some have considerable difficulty, and some would say they had no literacy skills at all. They are

not homogenous literacy groups like a class. And this means that much of the literacy learning is shared learning, members learning from each other. Not everything comes from the facilitator/teacher.

- the literacy learning is directed towards the common shared task; it is undertaken for a purpose, so that the group members can do their primary activity more effectively. And this means that when the group members are learning through material which they see will contribute to that task, their motivation will be high; and whenever they are asked to learn through material which they cannot see will contribute to their own common task (e.g. the primer), their motivation will decline sharply.

This approach to planning adult literacy learning programs has been called a 'literacy comes second' approach (see Rogers 2000). That is, the group members have come together to do something for themselves first; and they are learning literacy skills secondly, in order to help them to do that first activity. The learning program will be highly localised, specific learning, using texts which are specific to that context.

3. Creating new groups (classes) for literacy learning:

An opposite approach is the 'literacy comes first' approach: that is, the group members are thought to need to learn literacy skills **before** they engage on some developmental or social action task.

Adult literacy class, Bangladesh. Christian Aid

We can see two different forms of such groups:

a) ***demand-led groups:*** these consist only of voluntary learners, those who express their interest to learn literacy skills. These programs do not set a number for the participants – they will take anyone who wants to come. On the whole, where they exist, such groups are small; but they are highly motivated and will often persist for considerable lengths of time.

b) ***literacy classes***, similar to those we noted above at the start of this section. The members of these groups are chosen by criteria set by the providers (they must be illiterate or not having finished their primary schooling). A set number of learners for each class or center (usually 25 or 30) is determined by the providers. This is adult schooling, a 'supply-led' rather than a 'demand-led' program.

Such school-like groups – which are hard to form and even harder to maintain and are clearly the least effective of all these different groups – are still the most common form of adult literacy learning program in developing countries.

Forming such groups is often a very hard task for the organizers, whether they are managers, supervisors or project officers. They and the facilitators are asked to motivate local residents to join the classes; they frequently have to develop substantial powers of persuasion. To do this, some of them tend to exaggerate on the one hand the disadvantages of 'being illiterate', the deficits, and on the other hand the benefits of 'becoming literate'. Although these programs usually deny any suggestion that illiteracy and ignorance are the same or are closely linked, both the practice of this kind of literacy learning program and the language used reveal that there is still an underlying belief that to be illiterate is to be ignorant. Many programs still seem to work on the assumption that in order to gain new knowledge and skills, the participants need to learn literacy skills first. There is always the danger with this approach that when the participants realize that such claims are exaggerated, they may become disillusioned: as one farmer in Kenya put it, "Once I was poor and could not read or write; now I can read and write, but I am still poor".

See
2:3

And **maintaining** such groups is also very hard. Every adult literacy learning program set up on this model reports problems of 'drop-outs'.

See
10:16

Gender: Most of the groups in this category are for women. International and national agencies have identified illiteracy among women as an area of special needs. Specially prepared materials are provided for all women on the basis of what the providers believe are the common interests of women (cooking, children, health etc). Some groups are for men only; a few are for mixed gender groups.

The value of literacy classes: The reason why many agencies continue to provide such special literacy learning groups is that many people wish to attend such classes. Apart from the learning of literacy skills, such groups serve a number of valuable purposes. They are often the first groups (especially for women) in the villages or urban areas. Literacy classes provide both space and time for other activities. Women in some situations can more easily go out to a literacy class than to other kinds of activity such as a women's discussion group or social action group. Groups like these can create a sense of solidarity; they often provide an opportunity for gossip (which has important social functions for both men and women in any community) and group discussion of common interests and concerns; they help the growth of confidence. But these benefits are only marginally linked with learning literacy skills – they come more from the group identity and activities than from the literacy learning program.

Characteristics of new groups: Both of these kinds of programs, those which respond to demand only and those which try to motivate adults to learn literacy skills, create *homogeneous* groups – that is, groups which consist of all non-literate persons. Therefore most of the learning will be done from the teacher/facilitator to the literacy learner rather than peer learning. And the learning in these groups is individual and for individual use of literacy skills, rather than collaborative learning for shared purposes as in the 'existing group' category.

In both cases, the organizers build the group from scratch. Along with the participants, they identify a meeting place, find a facilitator, and agree a set format of meetings and group structures. Decisions are taken as to whether such groups will be single sex (all men or all women separately) or mixed sex groups. Since all these decisions depend on local cultures, on what the prospective participants feel most comfortable with, which will vary from one part of society to another, the organizers of these programs frequently negotiate such matters with the prospective participants if they are able to do so.

See Chap 11

Some of these classes never develop group structures for themselves; they remain a set of individual learners. But many others do become more cohesive, developing other group or individual activities such as income-generation or savings and credit or social action. In India, it was the groups formed by the literacy campaign which gave the women in Nellore District and later in the rest of the state of Andhra Pradesh the sense of power to attack the liquor shops in their districts. But, as we shall see, the relationship of these other activities to the literacy learning program is often problematic.

There are of course other kinds of literacy learning activities. In some countries, adult learners attend primary school classes alongside the children. In one or two countries, computers are being used to help adults to learn literacy skills. Experiments are growing all the time.

TABLE 3.1

A SUGGESTED TYPOLOGY OF ADULT LITERACY LEARNING CONTEXTS

1 Special contexts.	• refugees • issue-based contexts	• mixed characteristics • campaign
2. Existing groups	• community groups • special interest/task groups • work-based programs • school-based groups • vocational training groups • other development groups (health, legal literacy etc)	• usually heterogeneous groups • format of group already fixed • peer learning • specific literacy for common task/activity • specific texts • collaborative learning group continues after literacy learning
3. New literacy groups	• demand-led groups • literacy "classes" (supply-led)	• homogenous group (all non-literates) • format of group to be negotiated • no or little peer learning • generalized literacy (for all purposes) • individual, not group, learning and use of literacy • common primer • group usually ends after literacy learning

LITERACY EXTENSION

See
12:10
7:12

There is one very different approach to helping adults with their literacy tasks which is beginning to emerge in some developing countries. This is not a learning group approach but an extension-kind service, seeking to help adults with their literacy activities in the community – at the time and point of need. It gets away from the 'single injection' model and sees literacy learning as a continuing process like agricultural and health extension. The context in this case is the whole community; the program is aimed at individuals, not at groups.

This kind of literacy learning program is growing slowly. Some places have created 'drop-in centers' to which people can go with their literacy tasks such as forms for passports or driving licences etc. Here they receive help – and learn how to do their own literacies. In Nigeria, two literacy shops were opened in a market in Ibadan, to help the customers and the neighboring stall-holders to learn literacy skills through tasks related to their market needs.

A second form of literacy extension is that associated with the various kinds of informal teaching and learning of literacy skills which goes on in most communities. The husband or wife who is teaching their spouse, the child who teaches his/her parents, the worker who helps another worker to learn literacy skills are all different kinds of extension assistance in the community.

A third form of literacy extension is the building of literacy learning into other extension services such as agriculture and health extension. Here, development workers are being trained to help the people they meet with their literacy work as well.

But in general, most adult literacy learning programs consist of groups of adults working together with the help of a facilitator. They may be already existing groups; or they may be new groups.

Helping people with their own literacy activities. Save the Children(US)

ACTIVITY 3.2—3.3:

3.2a: Look again at your own program in the light of table 3.1. Which category do you think your literacy group(s) fit? Or are they different from any of these?

3.2b: Look at the contexts outlined in the case studies: can you place these into any of these categories?

3.3a: Which literacy learning context would you prefer for your own situation? Can you give reasons for this choice?

3.3b: If you are not free to choose, to experiment, can you borrow elements from any other kind of literacy learning program to incorporate into your own program?

See
1:4-5

Conclusion: *It will be our decision what kind of group we work with in our* adult literacy learning program. Will we work with an existing group, building literacy learning into its current activities, using the varied literacy skills and experience we find in that group? Or will we create a new literacy learning group consisting of people who do not have much or any literacy skills? There is no one right way to run a literacy learning program.

The advantage of working with groups of people who are engaged on some other kind of developmental activity has been well set out in a report of part of the Indian adult literacy program. One agency reported that in its discussions with the participants in its adult literacy learning classes:

> **Literacy by itself had no meaning or relevance for those with whom we worked ... Women attended our literacy classes only as long as it took them to find work, anything to help them augment the family's meagre ... income. They bluntly told our teachers to go [a]way or stick to teaching children. Learning how to sign their names or write the alphabet would not help to fill empty bellies.**
>
> **So, we stopped worrying about literacy as an end in itself, or as being central to our work. We began to work together with the people in trying to understand their immediate and daily concerns and difficulties; learning together to analyze the problems and understand the root causes; then planning how we could, together, find the answers and, above all, take action (Ramdas 1987).**

For the participants in this program, literacy in the dominant mode came after action to improve their lot.

4. Thinking About and Working with the Participants

If we are to build our adult literacy learning program on the existing literacy activities of the participants (see Fig 2.1 above), it will be important to think about the background of the participants in the program.

We do not wish to discuss this aspect in detail here, for this is more relevant to the teachers (facilitators) than it is to the managers, and this is not a training of trainers' manual. But nevertheless a survey of the participants is a useful tool for planning and management.

Some of the issues which will arise here will be the following.

- What is their experience of literacy? What do they feel about it? What expectations do they hold about literacy and themselves? Such expectations will to a large extent determine their learning progress.

- What are their other concerns? There is frankly little chance of adults learning literacy skills when the families for which they hold themselves responsible are hungry or ill. Literacy is a second-order activity to these people.

- What are their motivations for joining the learning program? What do they want to learn and why? We shall discuss this in more depth below, but unless we understand this and bring these motivations into the planning of the learning program, we shall never be effective.

See
6:5-6

- What are their expectations about the learning program? Some will expect it to be like school; they want to go through the schooling which they never had or never completed. Others will expect it to be very different from school. If they are disappointed in their expectations, it will not be easy for them to learn much.

How to survey the participants? Again, the question arises as to how far the managers can undertake such tasks. In this, as in the survey of the community, the manager can be assisted by the supervisor and the facilitators and the community support group. But the main support will be the participants themselves, once they have been gathered together. It is vitally important that the fullest possible involvement of the participants should be encouraged; for unless they feel that the learning program is their program, they will never fully support it.

Participation should not be confined simply to the limited area of the format of the program — where the group meets and when — leaving to the managers all the important decisions, such as what they will learn and how long they will learn for. Throughout this training manual, we shall be seeking ways to widen the participation of local learning groups and their community support groups.

ACTIVITY 3.4:

Draw up a schedule for the supervisors and the facilitators to use in conducting a survey of the participants – what they should look for, how they should try to obtain this information, and how they can involve the local community in this review. Who will you involve in making this schedule?

JOURNAL ENTRY

5. Thinking About and Working with Other Stakeholders

Decisions then need to be made about the program:

- who will be the participants;
- what will be the context, the kind of learning group we will be working with;
- how to survey the participants so that the learning program can be built upon their own needs and intentions.

See
Chap
10

It is the managers' task to determine how such decisions should be made and by whom. The managers can take such decisions by themselves – that would be quick and easy, and they would often feel more comfortable with that. Or the managers can involve others with them in these decisions. There are many stakeholders in any adult literacy learning program – the participants, their families, the community leaders and members, the managers of the work-place (in the case of work-based literacy programs), the supervisors, the funders, senior managers, other development agencies and their field workers, etc. One of the tasks of the managers is to identify these stakeholders and to develop ways of working with them.

See
7:7

Community support group: Every literacy learning program needs local support – a Village Education Committee (VEC) or other group which will assist with the planning, surveying, recruiting of facilitator and participants, resourcing the group, monitoring and evaluation and sustaining of the work of the learning group. In the case of development groups, such support groups probably already exist. In the case of work-based programs, it will normally be the work place which provides the members of that support group. In refugee camps, such a support group is particularly vital. In the case of new literacy groups, a community group will help to identify the potential facilitators and participants.

It will be important to ensure that such support groups themselves use literacy in their activities. In this way, a VEC can become a new focal point for literacy practices in the community, and they can act as something of a role model for the literacy learners.

All over the world, the use of local community support groups for educational programs is growing. This does mean a change of role of the managers. Instead of making instant decisions themselves, they will now be more of a convenor of groups for consultation and group decision. But that would strengthen the program, not weaken it.

ACTIVITY 3.5:

Draw up a list of the stakeholders you can identify for your programs. Keep this list by you and add to it as you think more about your program.

RAINER:

METHOD: Brainstorm.

Poster session

Key Questions—Chapter 3

When selecting our literacy learning group, we need to ask ourselves:

How many different kinds of learning groups can we identify?

What kind of context is the one we are working in?

In the light of this,
- what kind of group would we wish to work with in this particular situation?
- what is it that ***they*** want to learn to read? to write?

Chapter 4

Choosing the Approaches

In this section, we shall discuss some issues relating to the kind of literacy learning program we plan to build, including

- *contextualized and decontextualized learning programs*
- *different approaches to literacy learning*
- *some key points about numeracy learning*
- *factors involved in deciding which approaches to adopt*
- *the value of combining approaches.*

1. Different Approaches

Key Theme

Like the contexts, there are many different approaches to helping adults to learn literacy skills. But unlike the discussion on contexts, where we suggested that you need to decide which kind of learning group is most appropriate to your particular context, here we suggest that *several* of these different approaches can be used in one program. To use one approach alone will not be the most effective way of running your program. To vary the approach will not only increase interest; it will result in increased learning.

The Traditional Approach

Until very recently, most adult literacy learning programs in developing countries have used formal literacy primers (and nothing but these primers) which consist of carefully chosen words, broken down into letters and then built up again into new words. Learning then consists of either words ➜ letters ➜ words, or of individual letters ➜ words. All of these words are decontextualized: they are chosen because they are thought to be simple in both letter and/or syllable form and in concept (usually very concrete). In some primers, the words may be used in short sentences in the dominant literacy, but again these sentences are decontextualized. Learning literacy skills is thought to be linear: from simple to more complex, from concrete to more abstract. All of this is based on a formal primary school theory of learning, which many practitioners today feel is inappropriate for adult learning.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Bring selection of primers into training course for analysis

ACTIVITY 4.1:

Look at your own program. Does it use a primer? does it use letters or single words or sentences as the basis of learning? where did these words and sentences come from?

The Adult Learning Approach

See 2:10-11

See 6:15

It is now widely recognized that much adult learning is experiential. On the whole, adults learn for a purpose; they will learn only what they see as being immediately relevant to their real lives. They are goal-driven, goals which they set for themselves; and they learn up to that point where they feel that they have achieved their task, not the teacher's tasks. And they tend to learn from their own experiences, especially from their daily work, and from their peers rather than from formally set textbooks. They learn what other people would see as 'complicated' tasks, concepts and vocabulary, if these are tasks, concepts and vocabulary which they use in their everyday lives or which they feel they need to accomplish their goal.

To learn more about this, look at the books listed in the **Further Reading**. At this point, we need to note that in response to adult learning theory, there has been a growing use of additional teaching-learning materials, especially pieces of text which come from within the local community context, for example, newspaper extracts. Non-primer approaches to adult literacy learning are springing up alongside existing primer-based approaches (see Rogers 1999).

See Chap 9

There are thus many approaches to adult literacy learning programs. We do not discuss all of them here, but we have selected six approaches which we feel are the most important for our purposes:

- **whole language approach**
- **language experience approach**
- **generative words**
- **keywords**
- **phonics**
- **letter recognition**

These approaches have sometimes been given different titles. What one person calls 'language experience approach' is what another person calls the 'whole language approach'. We can see this in the case studies – some of them use terms such as 'whole language approach' to mean something different from what is set out in this manual. We have described below what we mean by each of the titles we have used in this manual. Some programs combine elements from different approaches.

2. Contextualized and De-contextualized Approaches

The key difference is between **contextualized** and **decontextualized** learning programs. This is a distinction which is becoming now widely recognized. Contextualized literacy learning means learning from written or printed materials which are drawn from or created in the immediate neighborhood, texts which the participants can easily and normally lay their hands on or which they themselves create. Decontextualized literacy learning means learning from texts (usually in the dominant literacy) which have been created outside the immediate community context and have therefore been 'brought in'. A recent research report described a *contextualized* literacy learning program as "a program that uses no textbooks, only materials from students' lives…[or which] uses a combination of student realia and workbooks", and *decontextualized* programs as those which "use only workbooks…and no student generated materials [or which] only use realia compatible with a teaching tool" (Harvard). They elaborate this by speaking of 'highly' decontextualized or contextualized as distinct from 'partly' contextualized and decontextualized, so that programs which use mixed approaches can be fitted in according to their main thrust.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Trainees write examples onto slips of paper and stick in clusters on a chart

ACTIVITY 4.2:

Use the case studies and your own experience to see if you can find examples of contextualized and decontextualized learning programs or programs which mix both approaches.

APPROACH	EXAMPLES FROM CASE STUDIES	EXAMPLES FROM OWN EXPERIENCE
Contextualised		
Decontextualised		

See 2:10-11

It is possible to learn literacy skills from *contextualized* approaches alone: and contextualized literacy approaches will help the participants to transfer their newly learned skills into use in their own community or occupational contexts. But it will be hard for adults to learn literacy skills from dominant literacy *decontextualized* approaches alone, and harder for them to transfer their decontextualized literacy skills into daily use with highly contextualized materials.

1. CONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING APPROACHES

We can see three main approaches to contextualized literacy learning.

1.1) Whole Language approach. This term normally refers to the view that language is whole; that to focus on letters or single words or grammar patterns is to lose the essence of what language is. Language is a social activity and has social utility. And language learning goes from the whole to the part. not from the part to the whole (Goodman 1986).

***Whole language approach –using a rural newspaper, Mali*.** UNESCO/Alexis N. Vorontzoff

We use this term to mean those literacy and language learning programs which use a continuous and meaningful piece of text as the basis of literacy learning. These are normally chosen by the participants, something they want to read for a purpose. Newspaper articles or advertisements, public notices, extension leaflets are examples of such texts. Other texts used include songs (especially film songs) or religious literature. This approach is most appropriate to existing task-oriented groups who use the texts associated with the group tasks for learning literacy skills – sewing pattern books, agricultural or health extension leaflets, accounts of savings and credit groups etc. In the workplace, notices at work or about new procedures can be used. But this approach can also be used by the more formal adult classes, by adding such texts onto the literacy primer work.

See Chap 9

Some agencies suggest that this approach is a second-stage approach, that adults need to learn letters and words first before they can learn from continuous prose or poetry texts. But this contradicts our understanding of experiential learning. As we have seen, adults normally learn from their immediate life needs, from the tasks they undertake. Their learning is not linear but problem-centered. They start in the middle, where their immediate concerns are, and reach out in different directions.

It is important that the choice of these texts should be made jointly by the participants and the facilitators. Managers and supervisors can help the facilitators to gain access to such materials. Newspapers and magazines and extension leaflets etc can be sent out regularly to the facilitators. A bulletin/newsletter to the facilitators can include suggestions of such material and even examples which some facilitators have found useful (the facilitators can be encouraged to write these sections of the bulletin themselves, a useful literacy practice for the facilitators).

See 8:14 9:12

See Chap 2

See 9:19-21

This is where the identification of real literacy tasks comes in. The Whole Language Approach uses those texts which are needed to fulfil these literacy tasks. One useful exercise is to take one or two of these real literacy tasks and 'unpack' them with the participants, to see what skills are needed to complete them. The literacy activities required to obtain a bank loan, or to complete a census or voting registration form, for example, can be taken for detailed analysis and discussion with the participants. Critical literacy can be promoted in this way.

See 9:9

1.2) **The Language Experience approach:** We mean by this term those programs where the participants speak their own words which the facilitators write down. These texts are then used to help the participants to learn literacy skills by first reading and later writing their own words. Examples are life histories, local stories, proverbs, poetry and songs, recipes, local community history – any oral account (even gossip) which the participants share among themselves and which can then be written down and used as teaching-learning materials. Descriptions of work practices or machinery may form the basis of work-based literacy learning programs. Later, the participants can write their own words as part of their literacy learning.

Extension text combining words and pictures, South India. Alan Rogers

Such material will be told in their own words; it will be their local voice, not the polite voice of the school room. In such an approach, there is no need to try to avoid using words which appear to the facilitator to be 'complicated'. Adults learn to read and write so-called difficult words and phrases relatively easily if these are meaningful to them, if they are needed to complete the task. They quickly learn to read and write the words they use in their speech. Names and titles of people and places and technical terms will all form part of this approach.

This approach is one form of Learner-Generated Materials (LGM), although LGM more normally concentrates on participant writing rather than participant speaking and then reading.

1.3) **Generative Themes:** This refers to a process by which the participants engage in extensive discussion on some topic (usually a local topic chosen by the participants) which concerns them, such as environmental issues, alcoholism, rape, or violence in the-home or in the community, safety at work etc. Out of these discussions, the facilitator chooses certain words for further discussion, unpacking their meaning and what they reveal about the context. For example,

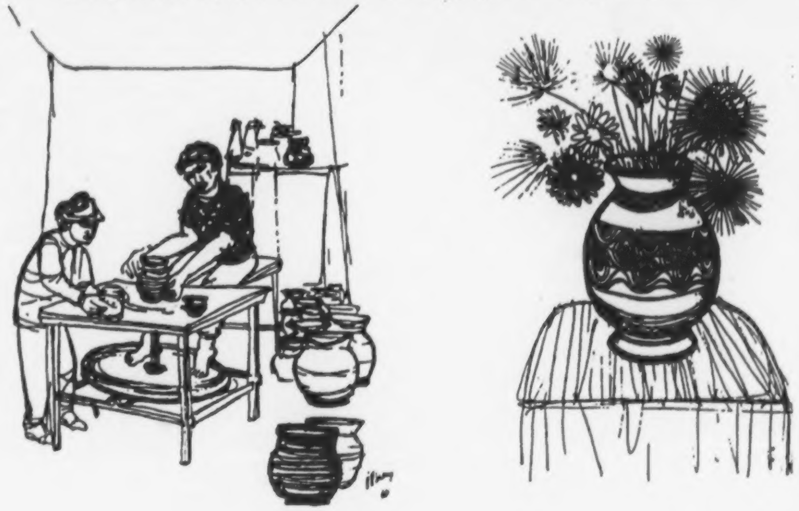
> in an urban area, what does the word 'slum' actually mean? who uses that word? or 'money-lender' in a particular rural area. What does the word 'family' convey to these participants? what does 'health' really mean in this immediate context? These 'illustrative words' are written on flash cards, and the participants learn their literacy skills from these. The words are chosen, not only for their capacity to generate debate (and if possible some collaborative action) but also for their syllabic structure which enables them to be used to make new words (e.g. 'arada' – plough: see Taylor 1993).

Freire used this method. He combined it with pictures which explored some local problem (not all of Freire's themes were contextualized; they became more generalized as time went on, the pictures and words being pre-prepared and brought in to the literacy learning group from outside). Freire and others encouraged the participants to problematize these words (and pictures), to examine them critically, to debate the issues which lay behind them. In this way, consciousness of social relations (especially oppressive social relations) was increased through the discussions (what Freire called 'reading the world as well as reading the word'). Freire advocated that such literacy learning programs should lead to action to change these oppressive social relationships. Such approaches have been adapted more widely to help the participants to explore issues such as gender relations, environmental concerns, legal rights etc.

See Chap 9

Pictures illustrating illustrative words

Taken from P.V. Taylor, The Texts of Paulo Freire, Open University Press, 1993



Sixth to seventh situations Man transforms the material of nature by his work.

A vase, the product of man's work upon the material of nature.

Such generative themes will include local word usages and local names which the participants use in their regular speech.

See 9:10

The **REFLECT** approach combines parts of both Language Experience Approach and Generative Words. Using the PRA (participatory rapid (or rural) appraisal) approach to developmental planning, local groups are encouraged to assess local development needs and to plan for themselves some local developmental activity. The discussions leading to this are used as the basis for both writing down the words of the participants and for choosing generative words; the participants in many REFLECT programs learn literacy skills through words drawn from their PRA activities.

Contextualized literacy learning and language: These three main approaches are 'contextualized' literacy learning programs. Each group will be doing different things, choosing its own learning materials. What goes on in one group may bear no relationship to what goes on in the next such group. Local events can be brought immediately into the learning context – for example, regular events like festivals and special crises such as an outbreak of diseases. Some of this material will be in local literacies, not the dominant literacy. The aim of the program manager is to encourage this diversity.

Issues of language arise again here. The language used in the Whole Language approach will of course be that used by the local texts chosen for the learning program. This may on occasion not be the spoken language of the participants. Or it may be a 'higher' form of the language, as in some Arabic contexts, where many texts are in classical Arabic, different from the vernacular language used by the participants. The Language Experience approach and the Generative Words approach will tend to use the *spoken* language of the participants, even though on occasion this may have little in the way of existing texts.

The decision about which language (and therefore which texts) to use is one which has exercised literacy practitioners and planners in many countries for many years. In contextualized experiential literacy learning, however, the decision about language will be determined by the kinds of texts which the participants choose to work with. In participatory literacy learning programs, again the decision about which language to use will be settled by what the participants want (although at times there may be differences of opinion among the learning program participants), and this may not be what the facilitators, managers or government want. Again we need to remember that we are working with adults, not children. They are will learn best what they want to learn, not what they are told to learn.

ACTIVITY 4.3:

Look again at the case studies and try to find examples of Whole Language Approach, Language Experience Approach, and Generative Themes.

Describe them in your own words.

2. DECONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING APPROACHES

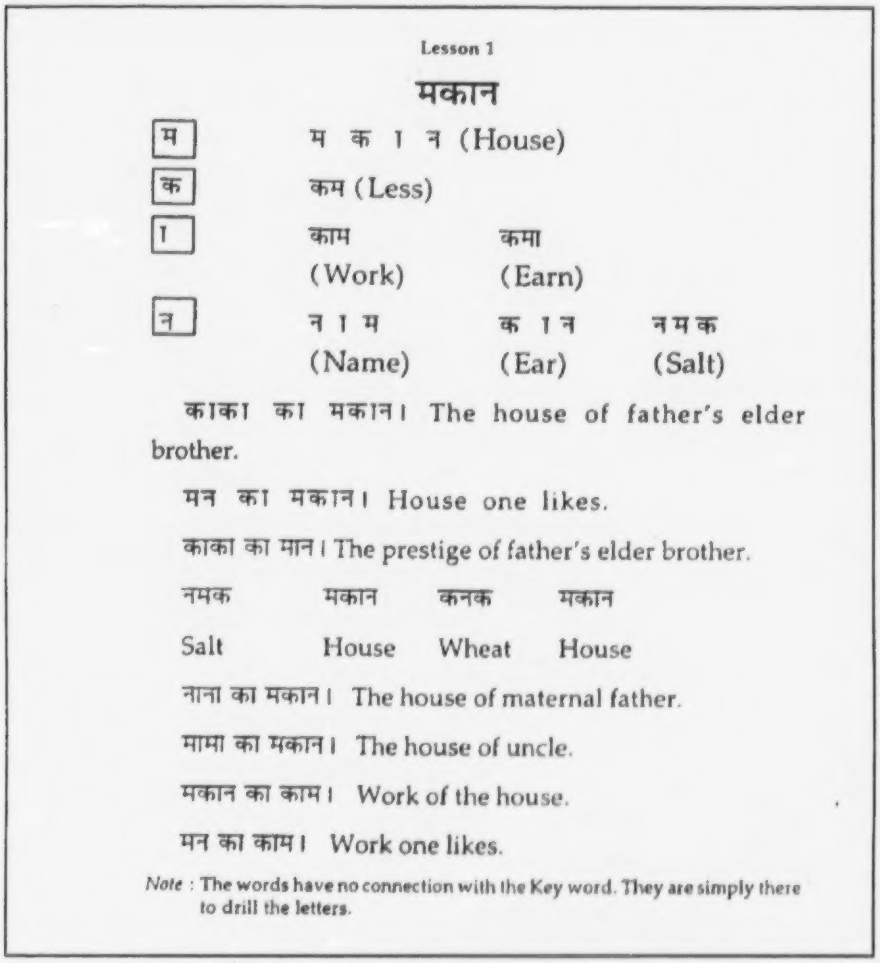
These are programs which rely wholly or mainly on textbooks or other teaching-learning material brought in from the outside. Those who prepared this material do not live in the immediate neighborhood. The same material is used in all the different learning groups. This material does not always consist of a textbook, a primer. It can be flashcards or posters or flip charts etc. It is always in the dominant literacy.

The main forms are:

2.1) Keywords: separate words, chosen by the literacy agency or facilitator because they are thought to be common or 'easy' words to read or useful words to build up into new words (for example, 'casa' – house). The words are often displayed on cards or written on separate pages in the textbook. The participants copy them. They move from word to word, the next words not being related to the previous one except perhaps by syllable. For example, 'casa' may be followed by 'mama'.

Page from a Hindi literacy primer using keyword approach

Taken from Indian Journal of Adult Education *vol. 59.2 April-June 1998 pp28-29*



Lesson 1

मकान

म	म क ा न (House)		
क	कम (Less)		
ा	काम (Work)	कमा (Earn)	
न	न ा म (Name)	क ा न (Ear)	न म क (Salt)

काका का मकान। The house of father's elder brother.

मन का मकान। House one likes.

काका का मान। The prestige of father's elder brother.

नमक	मकान	कनक	मकान
Salt	House	Wheat	House

नाना का मकान। The house of maternal father.

मामा का मकान। The house of uncle.

मकान का काम। Work of the house.

मन का काम। Work one likes.

Note : The words have no connection with the Key word. They are simply there to drill the letters.

The keywords are often chosen carefully to take account of what their writers feel are the special concerns of the participants. In some Hindi literacy primers, the words 'fire'(*agni*) and 'water' (*pani*) have been chosen because these are felt to be of special interest to women (i.e. related to cooking and cleaning, domestic activities). Some people find this approach patronizing to the participants, in that other people decide what the participants' interests are or should be. Some of the participants in these programs have pointed out that they rarely if ever have had to read the word for 'fire' or write the word for 'water'. In this case, the women participants felt that these words were not immediately relevant to their own *literacy* activities, they were simply decontextualized words chosen for learning literacy skills.

These keywords are often used as the basis of discussion, to bring out their local relevance. But they do not arise from the immediate context, from current local concerns; they are common to all the learning groups in the neighborhood. They are sometimes put into short sentences, but again these sentences are not localized, they have been centrally prepared.

ACTIVITY 4.4:

Write down here some of the keywords used by adult literacy learning programs in your own context/language. Try to determine some of the different meanings these words can have. Create short sentences which use these keywords appropriate to your area.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
brainstorm

2.2) Phonics: In this approach, letters or combination of letters are used because of their sounds, not their sense. The sounds are then used to build up words:

ca-
-sa
ca,sa – casa (house).

Sequences of sounds are then built up, sometimes systematically, usually by concentrating on the vowels: for example,

ca	co-
-sa	-sta
casa	costa

An example in English would be

ball - bell - bill - bull

These words are highly decontextualized. It is not clear whether the word 'bill' (in the English example above) refers to an invoice or a bird's beak; or what kind of 'ball' is meant (there is often a picture to show it is a play ball which may not be 'relevant' to the participants), or whether 'bell' is a tent or a musical instrument. The words are not chosen for their local relevance but because of their sounds. Such words are rarely used even for discussion. They are frequently chanted by the participants. There is often a lengthy process of copying whole pages of decontextualized and therefore meaningless words. These words are rarely used in sentences.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Brain-storm. Note to trainer: beware of the trainees assuming that these lists are "approved" or "recommended" lists, that these are the "right" words and sounds for them to use in their own programs

ACTIVITY 4.5:

Find examples of phonics in your own language area used in adult literacy learning programs.

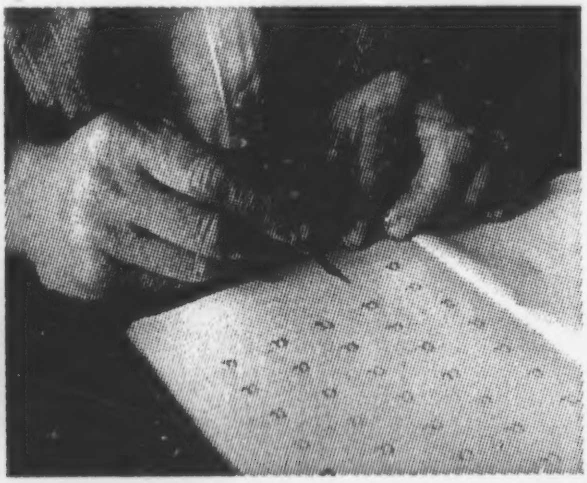
2.3) Letter recognition: some agencies still use a letter recognition approach, although this is increasingly seen as being both ineffective and particularly inappropriate for adult literacy learners, and it has largely fallen out of use in most programs.

Letters are learned in sequence in terms of their shape, not their sound. The association that a letter has to a word may be used to help to reinforce the memorisation of the letter. Thus for example, the letter 's' which is used in the word 'snake' may be better remembered because the sinuous shape of the letter 's' can be made to look like a drawing of a snake. This approach has been adapted to other scripts as well – for example, the Hindi script.

Individual letters are copied repetitively by the participants. Letters are learned in a pre-set sequence (for example, in English a,b,c,d etc). Chanting often accompanies this approach. But we need to note that the 'names' of letters are often different from the sound of the letters. For example, the letter 'a' (ay) rarely occurs as 'ay' when used on its own; in the word 'ball', 'a' represents the sound 'aw', not 'ay'. 'e' rarely sounds as 'ee' when used on its own, only when two 'ee's are used together. This has been found to confuse many participants. Again, the forms of letters used in the primer are not always the same as those found in printed texts (for example ɑ and a; g and g).

Learning proceeds through the use of charts and primers; copybooks are used extensively. Emphasis is laid on the 'correct' way of writing; letters are practised again and again until the teacher is satisfied that there has been accurate copying. This is the most decontextualized approach of all and is in most cases inappropriate for adult participants – it will very rarely help them to use literacy skills in their daily lives.

Letter recognition, Ecuador. UNESCO/R. Lesage



Learning letters (decontextualized). UNESCO/David Seymour

Decontextualized literacy learning and language: Almost all forms of letter and word recognition programs are in the dominant literacy based on standardized versions of script and language. National languages rather than local, and normative scripts rather than cursive or vernacular form the basis of this learning program. This may be what many of the participants wish for, to be exposed to the same learning processes and materials as the children, but they rarely help to develop usable and especially critical adult literacy practices. However, they may be useful in the context of a combined approach to literacy learning (see section 4 below).

TABLE 4.1

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTUALIZED AND DECONTEXTUALIZED APPROACHES TO LITERACY LEARNING

CONTEXTUALIZED	
Whole language approach	uses a piece of continuous text chosen by facilitator and literacy learners for learning literacy skills
Language experience approach	uses the words of the literacy learners (at first spoken and written down by facilitator; later literacy learners write their own words) for learning literacy skills
Generative themes	uses words which the literacy learners choose/speak as keywords for learning literacy skills
DECONTEXTUALIZED	
Keywords	single words chosen by facilitator or literacy agency on flashcards for learning literacy skills; words chosen for value in literacy learning
Phonics (syllabic breakdown)	words chosen by literacy agency for their sounds
Letter recognition	learning starts with copying letters, usually in alphabetic order

Many people use different terms for these approaches. Please do not get too concerned about exact words: get the **sense** *of the difference between these approaches, especially between the contextualized and decontextualixed approaches.*

3. Numeracy

Numeracy is almost always included in the teaching of literacy skills. This is too large a subject to go into in depth in a manual for managers: it belongs mostly to training of trainers' programs. But we would wish to suggest two or three key points here about approaches to numeracy learning which managers need to consider when planning their adult literacy learning program.

First, adults do not need to **learn to count**, as many programs seek to teach them. They already know their numbers in sequence. (However, we do need to remember that some groups have their own numerical systems which may not match those of the nationally approved systems; see Aikman 1999). On the other hand, adults do need to learn the symbols used for these numbers, to read and write numbers.

Secondly, adults do not need to **learn simple calculations** – they already do these in their heads, almost every day of life. They divide food up into portions; they calculate prices by addition and multiplication. They subtract when they calculate time, etc. They have their own strategies for calculation. The more frequently they use these, the more skilful they become at calculating. But they do need to learn how to write down such calculations, how to read such calculations.

Here we run into a problem. The school-book way of writing down calculations on paper does not seem to match the way in which many people do their own calculations. It appears from several studies that many adults use a process of addition when making subtraction! For example, subtracting 13 from 20 is not done, as in school, by taking 3 from nought (can't go); carry over one from the second column; 3 from ten leaves 7; carry back the one and add it to the existing 1 to make 2; 2 from 2 is nothing; answer 07. Rather, most people ask themselves, "What do I need to *add* to 13 to make 20? I need to add 7, 13 plus 7 make twenty". This approach has been tested several times in different parts of the world (e.g. the Philippines and India: see Doronila 1996, pages 3-5; Rampal 1997). It is one of several ways in which school-based learning programs are significantly different from real life.

Words and numbers: There is another way in which adult life and textbook approaches to numeracy learning are different. The normal adult literacy primer approach is to keep numbers separate from words. Frequently, there are separate pages of numbers set out in formal sums as in a primary school textbook. Again, these are decontextualized numbers. Thus $\begin{array}{l}21+\\12\end{array}$ means nothing. 21 what? 12 what? It is an 'exercise'.

But this is not how adults use numbers. Calculations are always part of some contextualized transaction; they always take place in the context of words. For example, three persons (members of a family or friends) going by bus to the local town market will cost…(but if one of them is a child, the cost will vary). Buying lengths of cloth to make children's clothes in the market will cost between xx and yy (the variation depends on the relationship created with the traders). The goods purchased may be divided between the three persons, who will each pay their appropriate (perhaps unequal) share.

Non-literate men and women are capable of making such calculations. We know of many non-literate women who regularly and easily calculate their chickens, eggs and profits without any paper; who run shops of haberdashery and tea-stalls; who sell fish in the market; who join in savings and credit groups – all of whom keep many calculations in their heads accurately.

Learning numeracy as 'sums', figures detached from words.
UNESCO/Dominique Roger

These are not exceptional cases. Such calculations of time, money, etc for both women and men are not games to play, like pages in a schoolbook. They are part of real life, part of problem-solving. They are 'real (contextualized) mathematics', not sample sums. Formal sums on their own are very rarely used, even in the markets or credit and savings groups: all such calculations are set in a specific context, are undertaken for a purpose. And apart from the different contexts in which calculations are undertaken, we also need to explore what forms of local 'maths' are already employed (for example, "many indigenous languages have number systems up to only 2, 4 or 5, and [learners] have to familiarise themselves with a decimal counting system which is new to them", Aikman 1999 p161; in parts of Nepal, people count in twenties, not in tens) so that we can see what difficulties they may have in mastering a sometimes very different mathematical system.

It would seem that numeracy learning based on real examples provided by the participants themselves is likely to be more effective than textbook 'sums' using larger and larger numbers and getting more and more 'difficult' (whatever that may mean). Helping adults with *their* literacy practices and with *their* numeracy activities is what adult learning programs are all about. They can lead on to more complex calculations later, when the participants so desire.

It is therefore important, if we are to treat our participants as adult and to use the learning processes they already use, for us to put numeracy learning into context –

a) to use numbers and words together, not to keep them separate.

b) to use examples which are real to these participants.

c) to help them to use their own calculating processes, even if these differ from the school-based approach.

The managers need to encourage the facilitators to draw out examples from the experiences of the group members. This will be much easier for task-oriented groups and for work-based literacy learning programs, but members of adult literacy classes already engage in shopping, go to the cinema, make recipes and cook meals for different numbers of people, are involved in farming or fishing or earning, may use rickshaws or taxicabs etc.

Critical numeracy: Approaching numeracy learning in a contextualized form, we and our participants will come to see that numeracy, like literacy, is intimately bound up with the local community power constructs. Bus conductors control (and sometimes abuse) ticket prices. Cab drivers control (and may abuse) travel costs. Market traders decide what to charge, and customers decide what to pay. Learning numeracy is not neutral – it either reinforces or challenges existing power relationships. Numeracy skills need to be learned by adults both contextually and critically.

ACTIVITY 4.6:

Draw up a list of numeracy tasks which you think your participants would provide for you if you asked them. Try to find ways of testing your list in experience.

4. Deciding the Approach

We have looked at six approaches widely used in adult literacy learning groups – whole language, language experience, and generative themes: keywords, phonics, and letter/word recognition.

The decision as to which of these approaches to use will be influenced by the nature of the group and its objectives.

See
3:4-5

a) *Task-oriented groups* such as income-generation projects will use the group task as the basis for the literacy and numeracy learning. *Work-based programs* will use the work processes and the texts found in them. These will therefore tend to use whole language approaches. *Formal adult education classes* will need to seek out contextualized literacy and numeracy learning activities – this is one of the ways in which the work of the specially formed adult literacy learning groups is more difficult than the other kinds of learning groups.

See
3:6, 8

b) Again, the choice of which kinds of approaches to be used will hinge on whether the learning group is *homogeneous* (all non-literate participants) or *heterogeneous* (people with mixed literacy skills and confidence). Heterogeneous groups tend to enter very quickly into whole language and language experience activities: they often have more confidence and engage in peer learning, sharing the tasks and their own knowledge. Homogenous groups are often made to feel that whole language and language experience approaches are 'beyond them'. They have often had their confidence to do literacy weakened, in some cases by the literacy agency which stresses what the group members cannot do more than what they can do. Facilitators, supervisors and managers often feel that the participants have to learn the dominant literacy (by formal methods) first and only later engage in whole language or language experience approaches.

None of this is true. Homogenous groups can and do learn from their own contextualized activities, using the whole language, language experience and learner-generated materials approaches. But it is harder for such groups, both for the participants and the facilitators.

Creating or adapting the approach? If we are free to determine what approaches are to be used in our adult literacy learning program, it would be profitable to discuss with the participants and with the community support group which kind of approaches they wish to use – what kinds of texts they want to learn to read and write. Some will ask for the formal and decontextualized kind of schooling which they never had or which they did not finish. Others will ask for more contextualized learning. Because they are adults, we need to start with what they want, not with what we as agencies want to do. This is what participation means.

See 1:4-5

But we are of course aware that many users of this manual will be implementing already existing programs in which the approach to be used has already been settled. However, we can still explore alternative ways of working and then review our own program more critically. We can discuss it with the facilitators, participants and community support group. We may find it possible to add some elements from other approaches to the existing program – not to replace the existing approaches but to build on them, to supplement them with other approaches. Facilitators can be encouraged, trained and supported to learn different ways of working with their participants, of perhaps adding other more participatory approaches to the existing range of activities which the participants do as part of their learning program.

The use of **the primer** may dictate the approach. A primer is always decontextualized. It has been prepared centrally and is meant to meet the generalized needs of all the literacy learners, not the immediate and local interests and concerns of each different group. But contextualized examples can be added to every page of the textbook. The participants can control a part of every learning session, they can choose what they want to learn and how, during a part of every meeting. The manager's role is to understand and to encourage this process, for adults learn best when they feel that what they are learning is relevant to their own particular situation at that time – from contextualized material rather than from decontextualized materials.

See 9:7-8

See 9:12-15

ACTIVITY 4.7:

Look at the primer being used in your programs (if there is one). What approach is being used in it? Can you see some ways in which it can be contextualised?

TRAINER:

METHOD: Use primers as listed in Activity 4.1

No one right approach: There is no one right way to help adults to learn literacy skills, because the participants themselves differ. Learning styles vary: we know that adults have different preferred learning styles, they learn in different ways. It is therefore important for the facilitator to use a variety of methods and activities and approaches. The best way to kill a literacy learning group is to use only one method: copying of letters or words or reading whole language approach extracts alone can become very boring. Helping adults to learn literacy skills would seem to be a matter of 'mix and match'.

And this will mean that a good teacher is likely to be able to make any of the different approaches work well by building on it. A primer can be used with the participants in a creative way, just as contextualized materials can be used mechanically without really making them relevant to the participants. The important thing here is the confidence of the facilitators to use different methods.

Two results flow for this discussion. First, we need to *combine approaches*. We can always add extra approaches on to existing approaches. There is no need to adopt one to the exclusion of the others; a learning group can use several at the same time.

And secondly, we need to *involve the participants* in the process of choosing and using creatively different approaches. These are not decisions for the providing agency or the facilitator alone. Adult participants need to be treated as responsible adults, capable of taking decisions about their own learning. But they can only choose as they experience the different approaches. It will be necessary to use these approaches with them so that they can decide.

Making decisions: Some of the other factors involved in making decisions about the literacy learning approach for your program may include the following:

- **language:** the balance between the spoken and written languages; the kind of script (e.g. Arabic/Chinese/ Sanskrit-based/Roman-based etc)

- **availability of written and printed material:** whether texts can be made available to the learning groups in the language that they choose

- **educational culture of local society:** e.g. do the participants and community support group expect the program to be a formal class with a 'teacher' or a non-formal discussion group with a facilitator; do they expect to receive a certificate?

- **format of program:** length, whether it is in stages, whether it uses only one teacher or teaching assistants (see below page 8:6).

Are there any other factors you can think of?

5. Conclusion

It has been our argument that there is no one right way for adults to learn literacy skills. There is a choice to be made, a decision to be taken. The role of the manager is to determine who should take that decision – the manager/agency alone, or with the facilitators, the participants, the community support group, or all of these together?

You may need to convene a meeting to discuss this issue with the stakeholders. The decision must however be taken in the light of local conditions. What is right for one community is not necessarily right for the community next door.

And it is not a once-and-for-all decision. The learning program will grow and change over time as the participants and the facilitator grow and develop. The approach to literacy learning needs to be kept under review. The use of contextualized teaching-learning approaches may well increase as time goes on as those involved become more confident.

It is not our intention here to describe in detail the many different ways of developing participatory approaches to planning your program. These will of course vary according to your own local context, your personal style of management, the nature of the groups you are working with, the culture of participation in which you are located, your own institutional situation, and many other factors. What we would urge is that any adult literacy learning program which seeks to be effective will help the participants and the local community in which it is located to assist with the planning and decision-making (and with the implementation), so that they feel it is 'their' program and not ours.

You may wish to go to Chapter 9 on Teaching-Learning Materials now.

Key Questions – Chapter 4

When planning our learning program, we need to ask ourselves:

Which kinds of literacy learning approaches should we use in our adult literacy learning programs?

- contextualised?
- de-contextualised?
- both?

How can we add contextualised approaches to de-contextualised programs?

How can we contextualise numeracy learning?

How can we learn what approaches the participants and the community support group want?

What factors do we need to consider when making this decision?

Evaluating the Program

This section will examine

- *the importance of evaluation*
- *the elements of evaluation*
- *the tools of evaluation*
- *self-evaluation and participatory evaluation*
- *issues of measuring achievements, confidence, self-esteem and empowerment*
- *and the problems of converting qualitative evaluation into statistical data.*

You may find it necessary to look at Chapter 6 at times as you work your way through this material.

It is usual to consider evaluation at the end of any program; but it is necessary to determine how our program will be evaluated before we can set the goals and objectives, which is why we have included it at this point.

1. Why Evaluate?

TRAINER:

METHOD: Plenary brain storm or poster session

ACTIVITY 5.1:

Brainstorm some of the reasons why every adult literacy learning program needs evaluating

You may have said that the main aim of evaluation is to satisfy the organizers of the program, the funders, donors or government agencies most concerned.

You may have said that the main aim is to make sure that the money is well spent, or that the participants are getting the learning program which they need.

You may have said that the main purpose of evaluation is to help you as manager to identify those issues which will make your program more successful.

Evaluation is all of that and much more. But from the manager's point of view, the most important part of evaluation is that it will enable us to detect when tthings are going wrong and how they may be put right; or to develop new strategies to bring about even greater success. In other words, it is a tool of our own planning. And this means two things:

a) evaluation cannot be added on later, at the end of our planning process; it must be built in from the start as an integral part of our program planning and implementation. It is closely tied to goal setting and milestones, whether they are set by ourself as program planner or by the participants.

See Chap 6

b) evaluation is not something which is done only at the end of the program. To be most useful, it will need to be on-going throughout the program. For goal and milestones achievement are used as a way for participants and facilitators to assess short-term progress.

DIFFERENT USES OF EVALUATION

Evaluation then will be used by different people for different purposes.

- **Participants** will use evaluation to see whether they are achieving their goals, whether they are making progress; for them, evaluation will be both a key motivator and at the same time a tool for learning.
- **Facilitators** will use evaluation to assess whether they are being effective in helping the participants to learn, to see if there are better ways they can promote the learning.
- The **community support group** will use evaluation to judge whether the literacy learning program will be of help to the whole community.
- The **middle level managers** will use evaluation to answer the question as to whether they have planned and are implementing the program effectively.
- **Senior managers and others** will use evaluation to decide whether the program has achieved the program goals.
- **Employers** will use evaluation to determine whether the program will help on their work plans.
- **Donors and governments** will tend to use evaluation to see if the program has added to the achievement of national targets.
- **Researchers** will use evaluation to try to understand what is going on and to test their own theories.
- **Trainers** are rarely engaged in literacy evaluation; in many contexts, however, it will be useful if these trainers could form part of the evaluation team – they could then see for themselves how far their training has been effective.

Can you think of any others who will use your evaluations?

What is more, many of these different groups will be evaluating each other.

Participants, when engaged in evaluating their own learning, i.e. self-evaluation, will also be evaluating the facilitator, supervisor and the program as a whole in *terms of whether they are helping them to learn. If they feel that the program is a* waste of time, that the work being required of them is 'beyond' them or that the dominant literacy is irrelevant to the local literacies they wish to use in their daily life, most of them will stop coming (some continue to come out of loyalty to the group or the facilitator, but that loyalty is very stretched, and they learn very little).

On the other hand, facilitators will be evaluating the literacy learners; they also engage in self-evaluation, assessing their own teaching as well as the supervisor and the program.

The **community support group** members mainly evaluate the facilitators and the program staff in terms of whether the program is relevant to the community. They very rarely engage in self-evaluation, although that would be valuable and might be encouraged.

The **supervisors** evaluate the literacy learners, the facilitator and the community support group. Again, they rarely engage in self-evaluation or evaluate their managers unless they are part of a management appraisal process.

The **middle level managers**, relying largely on reports received from the field and discussions with the supervisors rather than on observational visits, evaluate the literacy learning group as a whole and the facilitator in particular; again they rarely engage in self-evaluation.

The **senior level managers** and other outside bodies evaluate the program as a whole, relying on the statistics sent in by the middle level managers. It is they who set the standards which are applied across the whole program.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Small groups

ACTIVITY 5.2:

In the following table, enter what you feel will be the key purposes (aims) of each of the different groups engaged in evaluation.

participants

facilitators

community support group

supervisors

middle level managers

senior managers/funders/ government

Evaluation teams: Because of these different perspectives, a team approach is often adopted to major evaluations. This enables several different view points to be represented in the evaluation, and is seen to make it more effective.

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Two kinds of evaluation have often been distinguished, formative and summative. When evaluation is used to change the program so that it becomes more effective, it is called *formative* evaluation – it helps to form the program. When evaluation is used to assess the overall achievements, it is called *summative* evaluation – it sums up the achievement of the program. On the other hand, it has also been argued that these are not two different forms of evaluation, merely two different ways in which evaluation can be used.

2. What is Being Evaluated?

ACTIVITY 5.3:

Again, brainstorm exactly what you will be looking for in your evaluation. You will find it helpful here to look at the case studies to see how they evaluated their programs.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Brain storm or poster session

Since different people will use evaluation for different purposes, some of them will be looking for different things. But there are some generally agreed elements in the evaluation of adult literacy learning programs, whether these are located within existing community development groups, take place in the work place, or in adult literacy classes.

The first thing is that the word 'evaluation' reveals that evaluation is based on 'values', that is, judgments. Descriptions alone do not form an evaluation. A record of the attendances of the facilitator or participants, or of the work done in the learning group, is not an evaluation. An evaluation is a statement about the 'worth' of any activity, its value. And that value is judged in terms of its success: do the outcomes represent success? And if so, success for whom?

FIVE ELEMENTS

We would suggest that there are at least five elements in any evaluation of an adult literacy learning program:

1. **The goals:** are they the 'right' goals, are they appropriate, are they attainable, not too easy, not too difficult for the participants to achieve? We need to note here that the goals of the participants may be different from the overall program goals, so the question to be asked here is, 'Whose goals?'

2. **Progress:** are the participants making progress towards these goals, whether they are the agency goals or the participants' goals? There is an additional question here: do the participants *feel* that they are making progress? – for unless they feel they are making progress, they will not be motivated to continue with the program.

3. **The processes:** for example, teaching-learning styles, methods and approaches, the contents, the learning context etc. Are these processes the best means of helping to bring about effective participant learning? The identification of barriers to participant learning will form a major part of any evaluation.

See Chap 6

4. **Goal achievement:** are these goals (both participant and agency) being achieved? This will relate to the milestones and short-term goals as well as to the ultimate goal of the program. We also need to note that as the program proceeds, the goals may change, in which case the evaluation process also will need to change.

5. **The outcomes:** apart from the achievement of these goals, what are the other outcomes of the program? Are these positive outcomes? And who will judge this?

THE EVALUATION CYCLE:

The relationship between these elements can be seen in the evaluation cycle.

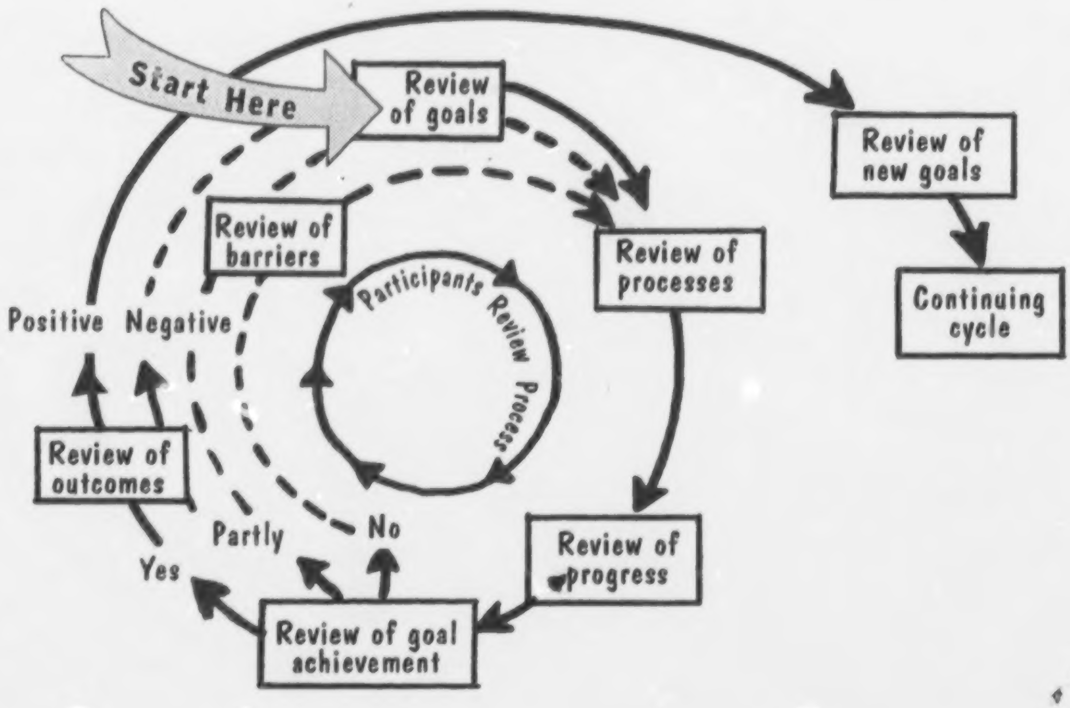
The process starts by reviewing the goals (including milestones: see 6:14 below). If it is agreed that these are appropriate for the local context, the processes will need to be reviewed. This will then lead to an assessment of the progress made. This may be judged in terms of 'yes', 'partly' or 'no'. If the answer is 'partly', a review will be needed of the reasons for the shortfall. Is the goal too difficult for these participants? what are the barriers to learning? If the answer is 'no', then the processes need to be reviewed again; for a judgment as to whether these are the best processes to bring about learning can only be made on the basis of whether learning is actually being achieved.

If however the evaluation indicates a 'yes' answer, the goals are being achieved, this will lead to a re-assessment of the goals (whether they are too easily attainable, not demanding enough). If it confirmed that these goals are appropriate, then the planners are free to consider the outcomes, whether these are positive or negative. This is an important factor of the evaluation, for there have been many development projects and programs where the goals have been positively achieved but the overall outcomes have not been developmental — where programs of training for increased production (for example, in agriculture or fishing or other products) have achieved their goals but have led in the end to the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming even poorer. In these cases, the goal achievement for the rich was positive, the outcomes for the poor were negative.

In the light of this assessment, whether positive or negative, it will be possible to set new goals, new targets, new milestones for the learning program, trying to increase the effectiveness of the program and overcoming any negative outcomes which may have been detected by the evaluation, and leading on eventually to the ultimate goal, the use of literacy skills in the daily life of the participants.

We also need to note that the participants are also engaged in making similar reviews of the goals, processes, their own progress, and the achievements and outcomes of the program on which they are engaged. We have represented this on the cycle by the inner circle.

FIG 5.1: THE EVALUATION CYCLE



MEASURES OF ACHIEVEMENT

It is important for us to distinguish between the *element* we are evaluating and what we are looking for as *signs* of that element. If the final goal of our program is that the participants will use literacy skills in their own lives for their own purposes, what will we look for to determine

a) whether the processes being used are the most helpful ones to achieve that goal? For example, will being able to read certain pages in the literacy primer and to do the written exercises in that book really show that the participants can now engage in the kinds of literacy activities they want to do (such as a credit and savings group)?

b) whether the participants are making progress towards their own goal? For example, can writing the words for 'fire' and 'water' show real advances in literacy skills and understanding needed for an income-generation activity?

c) whether in the end the participants have achieved their own goal? For example, can taking a test successfully at the end of the course really reveal whether the participants can now read the kind of magazines and books they want to read?

We need then to be very clear in determining what we are looking for as evidence that the goal has been achieved (the **measures of achievement**). We must not confuse these measures with how we will collect that data (the **tools**).

One example will reveal this. It is often said that we can tell if the goal of literacy skill acquisition has been achieved by asking the participants to take a test at the end of the learning program. But a test is not a *measure* of goal achievement. it is a *tool* to obtain information about the measures. What we want to see (the real measure) is if the participants can read a particular chosen text with fluency and understanding and whether they can write a set exercise relatively easily. The act of reading the text and writing the text with fluency and understanding is the measure. On the other hand, the test is the tool, the means by which we can see the measure. There are other tools which we can use to see the measure: watching the participants at their homes, for example, or in their community or task-oriented groups etc. In other words, there are several tools to enable us to see any one measure.

3. How Evaluate?

TOOLS

It is thus important for us to distinguish between the signs, the evidence on which we will base our value judgment, and how this evidence is collected, the tools we will use to collect the information on which we will make our judgments.

ACTIVITY 5.4:

Try to complete the table below

WHAT	**MEASURES/SIGNS/EVIDENCE**	**TOOLS**
Goals		
Progress		
Processes		
Achievement		
Outcomes		

Let us give an example. The milestone which has been set in one adult literacy learning group is for the participants to be able to read a particular newspaper article. This follows from an earlier goal which was that they should be able to read some headlines. It is one in a series of milestones towards fluent reading which is part of the adult literacy learning program. The evidence needed is that the participant can read and understand the chosen article. The tool could be a public reading, a private reading to the facilitator or supervisor, observation of silent reading followed by discussion with the participants testing their knowledge of the contents of the article. There are many different tools by which the evidence can be obtained.

Exactly the same process of collecting information on which an evaluation can be built for other literacy exercises such as writing a letter, filling in a form, re-writing a 'real' text etc.

We cannot give here a comprehensive list of all the tools of evaluation which are available for any literacy learning program, for they are many and will vary from context to context. For example, a work-based program might be able to include carrying out a written instruction, or increasing use of literacy texts in the work-place as well as at home. A development group literacy learning program would use as evidence increased literacy activities in the group. We have however listed below some of the more common evaluation tools which you can use.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual activity, then shared with other trainees

ACTIVITY 5.5:

Here is a list of some tools. Try to indicate what measures these tools would show. If you are not sure about some of them, do not worry – add your own.

TOOLS	WHAT WOULD THESE TOOLS SHOW?
Case studies	
Class/group records (eg. attendance or loans register etc.)	
Interviews, discussion	
Journals	
Observational visits	
Participant diaries	
Participant portfolios	
Participant satisfaction	
Perceptions of community	
Products	
Questionnaires	
Reports	
Surveys	
Tests	
Written documents	

Can you think of others?

Clearly, for evaluation, whether it is on-going or interim or a final evaluation, to be effective, it will be necessary for careful records to be kept of the learning program. We suggest that the participants can keep a small file (portfolio) of their own records, of work done, of the goals they have set for themselves, of agreed milestones passed, of their own special achievements and successes, of work that they have done on their own different from the other participants etc. Such records can be re-visited from time to time to help to build up the literacy confidence of the participants.

Certificates: Many programs provide a certificate at the end of the learning program. There are of course different kinds of certificates – those awarded for passing a test, or certificates of attendance offered to all the participants who attend an agreed number of learning sessions, for example. There are powerful arguments in favor and against such certificates. First, many of the participants wish to receive them as a sign of recognition of their achievements. And certificates can open doors after the course. But on the other hand, such certificates will often distort the learning program; learning may be done more for the acquisition of the certificate than for the use of literacy skills. And the certificate is a recognition of what the participants *can* do at a particular time, not what they are motivated to do and in fact *do* do afterwards.

Certificates also usually decontextualize the learning program, for certain standard tests using standard, not localized, materials normally form the basis of these awards. However, certificates can be and are being awarded for individualized learning tasks (for example, personal projects in which the participants choose their own texts for the tests) so long as these tasks demonstrate clearly identified key skills; but this calls for special skills in assessing the result which many facilitators will not possess. Perhaps external assessors can be used for this task (e.g. the supervisors or others).

You will have to decide in your own context whether to award such a certificate or not.

The Progress Profile: One tool which has begun to show considerable benefit is the Progress Profile. It shows clearly how closely linked goal setting, learning and evaluation are. Although it was originally developed for use by individuals, it can also be used for groups.

The Progress Profile starts by asking the participants, in association with the facilitator, to set down clearly what they wish to achieve, some literacy task they want to do – for example, to write a letter on their own with very few spelling errors. They then set down what they can already do, and therefore what they feel they need to learn in order to achieve that goal. The steps to be taken are then agreed and are written down. At the end of each step, the participants are asked to say how far they feel they have progressed, how well they feel they have done in this task. There is a grid which the participants can shade in to indicate whether they feel that they have only just started, have done about half of the learning required, are nearly there but not quite, or have completely mastered the step. Then they can continue with the task or move on to the next task.

Written out like this, it sounds elaborate, but it is in fact relatively simple. And it has the advantage that literacy activities are being used to help the participants to learn literacy skills.

A simpler form of the Progress Profile is to persuade the participants, again individually or in groups, to write down their own literacy learning goals, and on this sheet every week or so, in association with the facilitator, to write down what they have done, what they have achieved during that week, and what they feel about what they have done. Participants are thus encouraged to keep their own records of their achievements. Over time, they will be able to revisit these records, re-read what they wrote and assess their own progress.

It is sometimes urged that neither the participants nor the facilitators would be able to engage in such activities, evaluating the progress the participants have made, that it requires special qualities. But in fact, inside themselves, both the facilitators and the participants are regularly reviewing their own work, how much progress they are making. All that the Progress Profile calls for is some open discussion between the facilitators and the participants about the progress being made in the learning group. And this is a matter of confidence and trust between the two. (For more on this, see Fordham et al 1995).

4. Some Issues in Evaluation

There are many uncertain and disputed issues relating to evaluation. We will take just two or three of these for discussion here: you will probably be able to identify others which will concern you.

4.1 Gender issues in evaluation: Many people now recognize that planning an evaluation will involve gender issues. For example, they note that many programs are aimed primarily at women participants and that they use women extensively as facilitators, yet most of the supervisors and managers tend to be male. And since most of the evaluators tend to be men, they frequently support the supervisors and managers more than the facilitators and literacy learners. This is not of course always true, but in some evaluations, the majority of the evaluators are of a different gender from the program participants. A number of agencies then have determined to adopt a team approach to evaluation, trying to ensure that an appropriate gender balance will be observed.

4.2 Participatory evaluation: Participatory evaluation is a term which refers to evaluations that are the shared responsibility of participants, facilitators, community people and others involved in the literacy learning program. This is a form of participatory research. In a participatory evaluation process, participants are practising the skills of reading, writing and numeracy; it offers real reasons to use these skills. Some examples include:

- Participants and facilitators together evaluate progress, achievements and goals, and also evaluate the program effectiveness/success.

- Participatory processes used to gather data about how participants are using their literacy practices, through interviews, focus groups, and observations done by participants as well as by the facilitators or supervisors.

4.3 Unpacking achievements: The way 'achievements' is defined will vary a great deal according to the context and the kind of learning group. Does it, for example, mean

- a measurable increase in household income?

- the degree and frequency of record keeping by the group?

- increased participation in community organizations?

- increased knowledge about health and other matters?

- changes in attitudes towards children's schooling?

- measurable increases in school attendance and school performance by the children of the literacy learning group members?

- increased confidence and self-esteem?

All of these have been used by different adult literacy learning programs to assess the success of their program.

But the links between these factors and literacy skill learning are not plain. The increased knowledge about health and other matters, for example, could have been gained without any accompanying literacy learning. The increased participation in community organizations may be a result of increased participation in activities outside the home, not from increased literacy skills.

The only really significant measure of the achievements of *literacy* learning programs is the increased use of literacy skills in daily lives– and that will mean an evaluation conducted *after* the end of the learning program, perhaps at least six months afterwards. Such an approach will have profound implications for the

See 1:8

evaluation of our programs. For example, if out of a group of thirty literacy learners, 25 of them end the course and successfully pass the test, it could be argued that the achievement of the course was 25 participants. But if after six months only fifteen of these are actually reading and writing, engaging in literacy activities in their lives, is our achievement rate 25 or 15?

The situation becomes even more complicated than this. What if of the fifteen, five are engaging in literacy activities relating to development (e.g. health or agriculture or income generation), five are reading film literature and five are using literacy for consumer items (sales catalogues, fashion magazines etc)? How can we judge the achievements of our literacy learning program then?

And this raises also the issue of **critical literacies**. What if we find that our participants, after the end of the literacy learning program, are reading the local newspapers but are reading them uncritically, accepting everything that is said in the papers for truth? If we want the participants to become readers with understanding and discernment, and not people who accept messages sent down to them from above (whether from government, NGO, development agency or commercial/consumerist organizations), then we shall need to develop methods (i.e. measures and tools) which help us to see how far they are reading critically.

4.4 Confidence, self-esteem and empowerment: It is sometimes suggested that adult literacy learning programs lead to increased confidence and self-esteem among the participants. This is often true. But there is an unacceptable corollary which goes with this, that adult participants when they first come to the program lack self-esteem and confidence. This is not always true.

The problem comes because we talk of 'confidence' in the singular, as if there were only one confidence. All of us have multiple confidences. We may feel confident about cooking but lack confidence to ride a bicycle. We may have confidence in relation to children but lack confidence in relation to other adults. Thus many men and women show confidence to engage in debate on public issues but they lack confidence when it comes to literacy activities — they shrivel up when they see a text or when they are asked to fill in a form. Our program is aimed at increasing the **literacy confidence** of the participants, and this will add significantly to the way they feel about themselves, to their total self-esteem.

See
2:13
6:7

Literacy empowerment: Confidence is of course strongly related to power. Once again, there are many dimensions to power, not just one. A woman may have power in parts of her family but not over or with her husband. A man may have power in one circle but not in another. Thus, to talk about adult literacy learning programs leading to empowerment misses the point: which dimension of empowerment is it that we are talking about? Until this has been agreed (and it usually is determined in terms of specific tasks, things the participants, individually or collectively, wish to do), it will be impossible to evaluate the success of our program in terms of empowerment. There is a great danger here that the organizers of literacy learning programs will decide in advance what kinds of activities they will expect the participants to engage in to show their empowerment: but surely it should be left to the participants to decide how to use their new power?

4.5: Reconciling different stakeholders: There are then many different forms of achievements for the participants, many different confidences and empowerments. And this creates a major problem in evaluation, perhaps the greatest difficulty of all.

Senior managements, donors and governments need comparable statistics to evaluate the program; they need to have figures gathered on a comparable basis. They therefore tend to use uniform tests, standards which are applied to all and are therefore decontextualized. And the data they collect is quantitative rather than qualitative.

Some of the participants, for reasons of access or self-esteem, also want certificates to prove to themselves and to others that they have completed their learning program, that they have 'worth' in modern society. They too want uniform tests.

But other participants want their own outcome, to use literacy for their own purposes. Some only want to learn to sign their names — are they to be regarded as failures because they are judged by the standard tests? Some want to read sports or fashion magazines or shopping catalogues; some want to write songs rather than fill in applications for loans. Again, are these to be considered failures? What is needed are some qualitative ways of evaluating the outcomes of our learning programs.

4.6 Quantitative and qualitative evaluation: Traditional quantitative approaches to evaluation have 'made the measurable important' (i.e. what can be measured, a test, has become very important), whereas qualitative evaluation is trying to 'make the important measurable' (i.e. what the agency and/or the participants feel to be important to them will become measurable). One recent report expresses this well:

> **"We just try to help people improve their reading skills, if they want to, and we are tracking to see if that alone improves self-esteem. Of course we know...it does. It irritates me that somebody thinks I have to 'prove' what intrinsically can't be really proven, only reported in terms of personal perception of more confidence etc....what we have done is develop a long list of measurable outcomes expressed to us by the learners as they describe their own progress. No-one is expected to reach them all or even necessarily any of them. What we track are...the results he or she wants to achieve. Later, the adult is asked to reflect on their experience in an interview. We think there is an inner circle within this circle, in that while we are recording data, we are also developing a more reflective learner." (D Yoho, personal communication 1999)**

Evaluation seen in these terms is difficult to convert into statistical data. It is possible, but the terms of this conversion need to be agreed with the senior management team. The Progress Profile approach, for example, can be used to demonstrate that a certain percentage of the participants achieved to a very large extent the goals which they had agreed with the facilitators or supervisor, even though these goals may be different from each other. The use of both 'typical' and 'telling' case studies is another major tool here, although it may be more difficult to convert these into statistics. Typical case studies indicate normal patterns of behavior; telling case studies reveal individual cases which however make a major point clear.

This need to provide some form of statistical evidence of achievements and outcomes is one reason why evaluation needs to be planned from the start of the program. All programs seek to measure if the goals of the program have been achieved; and therefore these goals need to be determined right from the start in clearly measurable terms. The aim of the adult literacy learning program which we wish to promote through this manual is to help our adult participants to use their literacy skills in their daily lives. Therefore from the start, we need to set out (in association with them) some of the ways in which we will look to see if this goal has been achieved. Then we can set this information out in some form of statistical statement if required.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
Small groups

ACTIVITY 5.6:

Try to work out for yourself some of the ways you would measure the use of literacy skills in daily life, using a) statistical measures, and b) qualitative measures. We have given one example.

USE OF LITERACY SKILLS	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES	QUALITATIVE MEASURES
using literacy skills when visiting a nearby town to complete a transaction or locate a site (e.g. hospital or government office)	the number of persons so engaged or number of different occasions when such activity is undertaken etc	ease with which these tasks are completed; feelings of confidence; effectiveness of the visits, sense of achievement etc

5. Conclusion

Now perhaps we can see why evaluation is far from easy: how it is a contested area, uncertain in its application. We will need to work hard at deciding our evaluation processes before we set the goals for our program.

Key Questions—Chapter 5

When planning our evaluation, we need to ask ourselves:

How will we use our evaluation?

What will we be looking for as signs of success in our program?

How will we gather this information?

How will we encourage self-evaluation and participatory evaluation in our program?

How can we measure increased confidence, self-esteem and empowerment?

Can we convert such measures into statistical information? do we need to?

Chapter 6

Setting the Goals for the Program

In this part of the training program, we will

- *explore the goals of the participants, of the agency, and of the other stakeholders*
- *examine the concept of a hierarchy of goals*
- *identify the need for clear goals and clear measures of goal achievement*
- *identify the need for achievable (realistic) goals and of intermediate goals (milestones)*
- *try to see how to match participant goals and agency goals*
- *and look at the desirability of keeping goals under constant review.*

Although you are free to follow any sequence, we strongly advise you to make sure you have looked at Chapter 5 before you deal with this subject.

Having examined the kind of literacy which we are seeking to promote through our adult literacy learning program (for example, *community or work-related literacy)* (Chapter 2);

having found the group of literacy learners we wish to work with, sometimes existing groups with their own intentions, sometimes new 'literacy-mainly' groups (Chapter 3);

having determined whether we shall use different teaching-learning approaches or one approach alone (Chapter 4);

having settled the measures we will use to assess the success of our program (Chapter 5);

it is now time to finalize our plans by setting the goals for our program.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual exercise

ACTIVITY 6.1:

Set down here the goals you think your adult literacy learning program should achieve (note: these will be *your* goals; they may be different from the goals of the participants).

1. Importance of Goals

Do goals matter? The importance of goals to the success of any learning program cannot be emphasized too much. It is essential to keep the goals in sight throughout the program. Without goals, the program will become aimless, wandering without direction. Without goals, it will not be possible for the agency or the facilitator to determine whether the program and the participants are making any progress. Above all, the participants themselves will quickly become demotivated

- if the goals are not clear to them
- if they feel that the goals are unachievable
- if the goals set by the program do not match the goals which the participants set for themselves

Pre-set goals? We have seen some of the agency-set goals. Some adult educators deny that there should be any pre-set goals at all: they say that adult learning programs are sites where adults encounter new people and new subject matter, and the outcomes are always unpredictable. While there is some truth in this, it is not possible to avoid pre-setting goals when planning a learning program; and provided such goals are wide enough to allow the participants space to develop their individual capacities to meet their own identified needs built on their unique experiences, provided these agency goals are not imposed on the participants, and provided the agency and the facilitator can be flexible enough to adapt their pre-set goals to what the participants want to do, then the determination of some pre-set goals seems desirable as a starting point for this learning journey.

Indeed, some pre-set goals are unavoidable. For adult education is the creation of purposeful learning opportunities for adults. The purpose can be very general (for example, the encouragement of greater awareness or greater self-confidence, or even allowing the participants to achieve their own purposes), or it can be highly specific (for example, to learn a particular skill or a health practice or family planning methods, or to learn to vote, etc.) But every adult learning program has a purpose – and this purpose is its goal. So that every adult learning program can be evaluated as to whether (and how far) it has fulfilled its purpose. And adults come to learn for a purpose also – and this is **their** goal. Goal-setting is an inherent part of planning learning opportunities for adults.

2. Goals Differ

WHOSE GOALS?

The first question we need to address is. "whose goals?"

See 3:16

We have mentioned several times the stakeholders in our adult literacy learning program.

TRAINER:

METHODS: local visits, role plays, or small group discussion

ACTIVITY 6.2:

Look again at Activity 3.5 and re-examine the list of stakeholders you identified. Do you wish to add to this list?

Divide your list into three main categories:

a) participants;

b) agency stakeholders;

c) other stakeholders (e.g. the local community etc.).

Drawing on your own experience, try to identify the goals of each group. You could survey some real adult literacy learning groups if this is possible; or use the case studies. Note that in some cases, the goals expressed by the participants may well vary.

	GOALS
Participants	
Agency	
Other Stakeholders	

This exercise should reveal to you that the goals of some of those most concerned with our adult literacy learning programs may well differ.

Different contexts: Goals differ, not only because of the different persons involved in setting them but also because of the different contexts in which the learning program is taking place. We noted above some of the different kinds of literacy learning groups which can form the base of our own program. Task-oriented or community-based groups will already possess one kind of goals, while work-based literacy learning groups will possess another. Groups formed specifically to learn literacy skills will need to determine their own goals, for these will not have already been set by an already existing group. There are no universal goals in adult literacy learning programs.

See Chap 3

Different groups: It is important for us to recognize that the various groups involved in goal-setting will vary greatly. Some groups work well together, others are more individualistic. Some try to encourage literacy activities in their group work, others try to avoid them. Some groups meet with enthusiasm, others with reluctance. Groups will vary – and the way these groups work on developing their literacy skills will also vary.

Different interests: But it is also important for us to recognize that the various groups involved in goal-setting will not always agree among themselves. For example, there will normally be within one group of participants different perceptions of goals and outcomes and even of what is happening in the learning group. The participants in any group will rarely be of one mind. Each of them will have their own interests, their own concerns. Differences will occur according to gender, age, class, experience and personality. Some may wish to develop literacy skills to write letters, others to help their children with their school work. Some may wish to join together into a local community group, others to work on their own. All of these views will need to be accommodated in one way or another. The differing points of view of the various stakeholders will influence the goals set for the program.

Adult Literacy Motivations

While the field of adult motivations for literacy learning is still very under-researched, some tentative findings may be hazarded. Four main groups of motivations for participating in adult literacy learning programs have been identified: it may well be there are more than these.

Symbolic: some adults join, not because they want to learn literacy skills to use them but because they want to join 'the literacy set'. They feel that other people (especially the literate groups) regard them as inferior because they cannot engage in the dominant textual communications. "They look at you as if you are stupid" was one comment from a participant in a program in Bangladesh. To avoid this scorn, it is worth all the effort of attending adult literacy classes and doing the work. 'Literacy' for them is a badge which will identify them as belonging to a particular group: it has symbolic value. Their motivation to do the actual learning will sometimes tend to be relatively low; and it looks as if some of these find the classwork less than satisfying quite quickly (they often seem to see the goal as being too far away to be ultimately achievable). They have no clearly identified milestones to help them through.

Instrumental: some adults join because they want to accomplish some literacy task — to read religious texts like the Koran or the Bible, to write letters, to fill in some form or other, to sign their name. In the case of existing task-oriented and work-based groups, the participants will often come with very clearly set stages and end goals. These participants will normally learn fast when they see the tasks (intermediate goals) as helping them with their own chosen tasks, and much more slowly when what they are learning does not seem to contribute to the tasks they have chosen. They will often be able to identify their own milestones and receive reinforcement of their learning from their own activities.

Opportunity: some adults join, not to learn literacy skills for use but because such learning will open doors for them at the end. In Botswana, some join because they can then get a driving license. In Nepal, some came to programs because with the literacy certificate, they could become Community Health Volunteers. Completion of a literacy learning program in the dominant literacy may help some people to get a job or to get promotion in their work. For others, it will help to get a loan or further training. Again, their goal is not the use of literacy skills but the benefits completion of a literacy learning program may bring to them personally. For them, their goal is far away, after the end of the program: keeping them going throughout the whole of the learning program with milestones which they feel are relevant to them will be difficult.

Access: some adults (usually very few and most of them young adults) will join because they hope to use this as an entry point into formal education — to get into school through adult literacy learning programs. This is of course one form of the opportunity motivation: the end of the literacy learning program will open the door into school. For them, the staging posts will be milestones which seem to relate to the work of the primary schools (sometimes a certificate judged to be the equivalent of a primary school Grade certificate).

You may be able to identify other motivations for adults to learn the dominant literacy skills in your society.

Such motivations are important for goal setting. All adult literacy learners will be judging their program in terms of their own expectations and objectives, in terms of how relevant it is to their own sense of need. If it does not meet their purpose, they will stop coming. This is one of the differences between adult learning programs and primary school programs.

ACTIVITY 6.3:

Look at the case studies and at your own experience of literacy program participants and try to find examples of each kind of motivation.

Fill in the following table.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Discuss in small groups

LITERACY LEARNING MOTIVATIONS	
Symbolic	
Instrumental	
Opportunity	
Access	
Others?	

DIFFERENT KINDS OF GOALS

Different focal points for goals: Looking at the list of goals you have identified (Activity 6.3), it may become plain that there is a distinction between those goals which are achieved *during* the program, those achieved *by the end* of the learning program, and those achieved *after* the program ends. For example, some of the goals may be expressed in terms of empowerment or improving the quality of life or increasing income – i.e. outcomes to be achieved *after* the teaching sessions have finished. Other goals will be set out as 'being able to read' (newspapers, for example) and 'write' (their own accounts, for instance), or increased confidence – i.e. what it is hoped will be achieved by the end of the learning sessions. This distinction between what is intended to be achieved during the adult literacy learning program (the short-term achievements) and what the eventual outcomes are intended to be (the longer term achievements) is crucial to our understanding of goals in adult literacy learning programs.

See
5:12-14

Goals then can be either **program-focused** or **outcome-focused**. The relationship between these two kinds of goals is of course close: the program-focused goals are meant to lead to the outcome-focused goals. Being able to read certain kinds of texts and write certain texts is seen as one of the most powerful ways of helping poor people to overcome or escape from their poverty, to improve the quality of their lives.

ACTIVITY 6.4:

Add the letters P and O to your list in Activity 6.2 to indicate which goals are expected during or by the end of the Program and which are Outcomes after the end of the program.

The way we can link these two is through the questions "why?" and "how?" If your goal is to help the participants to be able to read a newspaper, to sign their own name etc., then you should ask yourself? '*why* do we want them to achieve that goal?' The answer is that we want them to be able to read and write such texts so that they will receive more messages, or that they will use their literacy skills for practical purposes so as to improve the quality of their lives. If, on the other hand, we say that the goal of our adult literacy learning program is to empower the participants, we need to ask ourselves, '*how* will this be achieved?' And the answer to this question is (for example) that we expect them to be empowered by learning to read texts and write texts for themselves instead of relying on others to do this for them. In both cases, the program-focused goals will lead to the outcome-focused goals.

Short-term goals: But there are other kinds of goals which lead up to the program-focused goals, short-term goals, goals which will help the participants to achieve the level of reading and writing skills by the end of the learning program. These are learning goals, sometimes called milestones (see below). They contribute to the program goals just as the program goals contribute to the outcome goals.

Hierarchy of goals: So we have something of a hierarchy of goals, learning goals leading to program goals which in turn lead outcome goals, each level contributing to another level. Some people refer to these as aims, goals and objectives; and you may find it helpful to distinguish between them in this way. Others refer to long-term, short-term and immediate goals. Again, you may find that helpful.

TABLE 6.1 HIERARCHY OF GOALS

	AIM (ultimate; long-term; outcome-focused)	how? ↓
↑ why?	GOAL(S) (intermediate; short-term; program-focused)	how? ↓
↑ why?	OBJECTIVES (learning goals; immediate; process-focused)	

3. Setting Goals

We noticed above that, if the participants are to be motivated by the goals of the program, these goals need to be

a) clear
b) seen to be achievable
c) and matching between the agency goals and the participants' goals.

We need to examine these three aspects of goal-setting in more detail.

CLEAR GOALS

Agencies which plan and provide adult literacy learning programs often set goals for their program; and many of these goals are not precise.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Discuss in small groups

ACTIVITY 6.5:

Look again at the list of agency goals you determined above (Activity 6.2).

Do they look very precise or clear to you? Try to make some of them more precise.

For example.

a) ***Learning to read and write:*** This is of course the usual answer given when any group or agency is asked to set out the goals of the literacy learning program. But this is an inadequate answer, for the verbs 'to read' and 'to write' are not intransitive verbs, they require an object. One cannot just 'read'; one cannot just 'write'. One can only read something, write something. So the further question will be - to read what? to write what? The aim of traditional literacy learning programs is to help the participants to learn to read the primer or the other dominant literary teaching-learning materials being used, to learn to write the special exercises given by the facilitator. But as we have seen, it is not clear why adults should learn irrelevant exercises, it is not clear how these will help the participants with their everyday literacies.

b) ***Becoming literate:*** many assert that the goal of their program is to help the participants to 'become literate'. But what does 'literate' really mean? Who is a 'literate' person? A person who is able to read anything? It is often said to mean 'to be able to read something simple': but (as we shall see) there is no such thing as a universally 'simple' piece of reading. Does being able to read the pages of the literacy primer and write the exercises in it mean that a person is 'literate'? The term 'functionally literate' is even more meaningless: how can one tell if anyone is 'functionally literate'? What are the measures? These are very imprecise goals.

See
9:13-14

c) ***Empowerment:*** this is another term used in goal-setting by many agencies. But again, what does it mean? Which dimension of power are we talking of? And how can one judge the increase in power which the participants may have through the adult literacy learning program? There is a very large literature today trying to define empowerment, and some of it is very hard to read.

See
2:14
5:14

d) ***Further learning/ independent reading:*** One of the goals set by the agencies is that the participants will become 'independent readers', so that they can read improving developmental literature. But again, what does an independent reader mean? And *what* do we want them to read independently? Is it a good enough achievement for our adult literacy learning program if the participants read sports magazines at the end of the program? How can we measure whether they really read and understand developmental texts? And is reading on its own enough -- or do we want them to *implement* what they read?

e) ***getting out of poverty:*** In recent years, agencies have often seen the main goal of adult literacy learning programs as helping the participants to increase their incomes, to alleviate their poverty. But there are problems here: if it is measured in terms of any increase in family income, it is often not at all clear how much of that increase is due to increased *literacy* skills. How long will we need to wait to see the impact of literacy activities on family incomes?

f) ***receiving developmental and other messages:*** The aim of many adult literacy learning programs is to help those who have messages to get them across – especially such national campaigns as AIDS and health messages – both campaigning material and technical information. But again, this is a very imprecise goal; for much of the evidence is that these messages are passed to the participants through non-literacy means of communication – through posters, films or videos, discussion groups, radio or television, even conversations in the market etc. Will *reading* about AIDS really make many people change their patterns of behavior? And if there are changes of behavior among the participants, how much of this is attributable to literacy activities?

See
3:7

g) ***citizenship:*** the phrase 'literacy for citizenship' is on the lips of many people in many countries. This is one of the key goals set by agencies for recent adult literacy learning programs. But again, this is very imprecise; the goal is not clear. Does this simply mean 'voting'? or joining a political party? or becoming a member of a community group? What may be a goal for one agency is clearly not a goal for another agency. And again, how can one measure the achievement of this goal?

It is possible to get new information without literacy.
UNESCO/Studio Raccah

See
9:19-21

h) critical literacy: as we have seen, one of the goals which some programs set for their participants is to help them to engage critically with the texts which they have in their locality. Literacy is seen as part of problem-solving, as part of the process of analyzing the existing power structures and if possible changing them. But this again is not always very clear. What texts? all texts or only some? And what does it mean to be 'critical' of such texts? How can we measure such critical reflection? How do we know that the participants are engaged in problem-solving? in analyzing power? Again the goal needs to be defined clearly.

We are not suggesting that any of these goals are inappropriate. What we are suggesting is that simply to use terms like 'empowerment', 'functional literacy' or 'critical literacy' for our goals without defining what we mean by them, what information we will use to measure how far they have been achieved, and what means we will use to obtain that information, will only confuse matters. Some of the participants and other stakeholders will define these terms one way, while the providing agency may define them in another way. We often assume when we use a word like 'empowerment' that everyone knows what we mean and they agree with our definition. But experience indicates that this is not always true. The goals of our learning program need to be defined very clearly if they are to be useful. Setting goals for adult literacy learning programs, especially *clear* goals as to what it is that we want to achieve, is not easy.

Using the hierarchy of goals which we have seen, and the distinction between measures and tools mentioned in Chapter 5, will help us to be clear about the goals for our program. Table 6.2 gives an example which tries to indicate some of the hierarchy of goals and also the measures and tools of evaluation. You may need to spend some time on it, asking the same questions about your own program.

TABLE 6.2 MEASURES AND TOOLS OF EVALUATION

		WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE WE HAVE SUCCEEDED?	**HOW DO WE COLLECT THAT EVIDENCE?**	
	AIM e.g. empowerment	e.g. decision-making etc	e.g. observing them in their work; collecting from them instances when they engaged in decision-making cases etc	how? ↓
↑ why?	GOAL(S) e.g. confidence in reading chosen texts	e.g. reading activities	e.g. tests; watching them at tasks; asking about understanding of text etc	how? ↓
↑ why?	OBJECTIVES e.g. learning to use a written word in context	e.g. • using that word in a sentence; • finding that word in a real text and explaining its use in that text etc	e.g. written exercise; oral exercise; group discussion on different meanings of that word etc	

You will now see that it is much easier to set clear goals for literacy learning programs located within existing community development groups. especially task-oriented groups. and for work-based literacy learning programs than it is for new groups engaged in literacy learning alone. Goals set by existing groups will tend to be the participants engaging in literacy activities related to the task or to the work-place: these are clearly measurable and can relatively easily be seen. Both the *measures* and the *means* of verification can be identified clearly. Goals for new literacy learning groups will tend to be related to the learning program itself, not to some further activity using literacy skills.

See
3:4-7

ACHIEVABLE GOALS:

Secondly. goals for literacy learning not only need to be very clear: they also need to be seen to be achievable. If the participants feel that the goals are too far away. that the benefits of learning literacy skills are too long delayed. the goals will be seen as being unachievable. and this will be demotivating.

For example, if the emphasis in the literacy learning program is on the economic benefits of learning to read texts and to write their own texts, and if after three months there are still no signs that the learning program is helping to bring increased income soon, this goal will be seen as being impractical, too far away. Some of the participants may begin to feel that they have better and more important things to do with their time than to spend it learning skills which they hope will bring them increased income in the long term – but not yet.

See
Chap
5

Milestones: This is why more immediate goals may be useful. For example, it can be agreed between the facilitator and the participants that 'by the end of next week, we (either the individual participant with the facilitator or the group all together) will have got to this or that point'. These can be regarded as 'milestones', or staging posts on the journey. They reveal to the participants step by step the progress being made.

The achievement of such milestones one after another is a great motivator to the literacy learners. They particularly help to build up confidence, the feeling that if we have got so far, we can go on to the next milestone. But equally, if such milestones prove to be unrealistic, if they are not achieved, this can help to demotivate the participants. They therefore need to be set carefully – not too remote and yet not too easy to achieve, stretching the literacy learner.

Here we run into a problem which every teacher faces, whether in formal or non-formal learning groups. The participants will vary in their capacity and motivation and confidence. Some will make rapid progress, largely because their experience relates closely to what they are learning. Others, whose experience may be more remote from the learning matter, may move more slowly. The use of small groups will help here – clustering some of the faster learners on their own and some of those who need more attention also on their own. Or sometimes different groupings can be formed, mixing the faster learners and those who need more help together, so that they can help each other (not all the teaching needs to come from the facilitator; peer learning is in some contexts more effective than teacher-led learning).

These immediate goals need always to be agreed by the participants. Without their commitment to these milestones, they will never reach them. And they will constantly change. Once one set of milestones has been reached, the next will be agreed: "by the end of next week, we shall have completed ...".

See
Chap
8

In this activity, the facilitator is the key person. For these milestones will be different for every learning group. It is simply not possible to say that "by the end of the fourth week, every learning group in our program will have reached such and such a point". Each learning group, in its encounter with the learning material and with the facilitator, is unique and will move at a unique pace. Only the facilitators, in the day-to-day relationship with their own literacy learners, can help these participants to determine what they can achieve by a specific time.

The facilitators will need training for this activity – it is not something which comes naturally or easily. And they will need continuing support, for being responsive to the changing needs of the participants is a skill which some facilitators may find it hard to develop. They will often benefit from some mentoring – from peer facilitators, from local resource persons, from the local community support group, from the supervisor or from a specialist educational adviser who may be attached to the program.

As with the setting of clear and measurable program and outcome goals, the immediate goals (milestones) are much easier to agree in the contexts of existing community development groups which are engaged on literacy learning. Task-oriented groups will have their own milestones already; work-based learning programs will be able to draw their staging posts from the nature of their work. It is with the new 'only-literacy' learning groups that there may be more problems in determining the immediate learning goals, for there are no clear stages to learning literacy. Literacy learning is (as we have seen) not linear. The traditional UNESCO model on which so many adult literacy programs in the past have been built, of adults moving from being illiterate ➔ to semi-literate ➔ to functionally literate ➔ to being independent readers is inappropriate for adult literacy learners. It may be satisfactory for primary schools but that is not how adults learn. Adults tackle tasks, relevant tasks which they have chosen for their own more effective daily living. And they learn that task by trying out various approaches and methods until they find one which works for them. They are not 'grown-up' children to be disciplined into one progression. So they need to be encouraged to set for themselves their own milestones, to set a task for themselves which they feel they can achieve; and they need to be helped step by step to achieve that task.

See
3:4-7

See
1:9
2:10-11
4:2-3

4. How to Manage Differences in Goals

We have already noted that one of the problems which often arises in adult literacy learning programs is the gap between the goals set by the agency and the goals which the participants hold for themselves. This is shown by demotivation, dropping attendances, very slow learning progress and other signs of boredom. What can be done to meet this issue?

This will need to be addressed differently in every situation. But here we can suggest two possibilities:

Negotiating the goals: One way is for the agency manager-planner to discuss the goals of the program with the local participants, to set them out clearly including the measures which will be used to assess progress. It will also be helpful if the manager-planner is willing to change these goals and these measures if necessary.

It may not always be possible to meet with the intending participants before the start of the program – either because they have not come together or because of the size of the program. But it will always be possible for each facilitator to revisit these goals with their own learning group once it has met. It may be possible to ask every facilitator to provide a report on the participants' goals during the first two or three weeks of the learning program. Then the goals of the program can be revisited and revised if necessary.

Managers will however normally be able to negotiate with other stakeholders before the literacy learning program begins. It may be necessary to negotiate the goals with senior managers, donors or even government agencies to make sure the goals are clear and achievable. It will also be useful to discuss the goals with other stakeholders such as community support groups. This will be much easier if the literacy learning program is located within the context of another kind of development program – a PRA exercise, health, income-generation, credit and savings group, for example. These existing groups will usually have clear goals, both long-term and short-term, and it may be possible to integrate the agency goals into those group goals. But even for new literacy learning groups, some negotiation with local support groups would help to avoid a very wide gap between the agency goals and the participants' goals.

See 3:14

See Chap 11

Using interest groups: When divergent goals appear among the participants, then smaller interest groups can be formed. These could work for part of every learning session as peer learning groups, doing activities which they feel are relevant to their concerns, helped by the facilitator. In this way, different goals and expectations may be used to help on the learning. It is not necessary for the whole group to stay together the whole time.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
Poster session

ACTIVITY 6.6:

Can you think of any other ways in which the gap between the agency goals and the participant goals or between different participant goals can be bridged?

REVIEWING THE GOALS

The goals of both the agency and the participants will frequently change and develop as the learning program goes on. As the participants grow and change, as the facilitator grows and develops in confidence, as the supervisors (and the manager) change with increased experience, so the goals will change. What once was thought to be difficult may now appear easier; what once seemed easy may now appear to be more complicated than was at first thought.

Goals then need to be revisited several times during the learning program. Two sets of questions need to be asked about them:

a) are the existing goals being met? are the measures set for them being achieved?

b) are they still the **most appropriate** goals for these learning groups? Are they too easy or too difficult, too short-term or too long-term, too far away or too near? Do they need to be changed?

Such reviews can be made in various ways. They can be made by the facilitators in conjunction with the participants. For this, the facilitators will need training and support. Reviews can be made by the managers (usually the supervisors) meeting with both facilitators and participants (again, the supervisors will need training for this role). They can be made through regular review meetings between the managers and the other stakeholders, especially the local support group or, in the case of work-based programs, with the employers or works managers.

See Chap 8

See Chap 10

See 3:14

5. Conclusion

We want to be very practical about this issue of setting and revising goals.

For those of us who are creating new adult literacy learning programs, we will need to determine the goals of our program, and wherever possible discuss these with the facilitators, supervisors, and local support groups before the program begins. We will need to be realistic about what can be achieved, and what we and the other stakeholders believe the intending participants wish to achieve. In the case of pre-existing groups or work-based groups, it will be possible to meet with these groups or the other development programs, or the employers/managers of the work place, to see what these people want. Then a final and agreed list of goals can be drawn up. Once the participants have met, these goals can be re-negotiated. Regular meetings need to be held to revise the goals throughout the program.

See 1:4-5

See 3:4-7

Many managers may feel that all of this will be too troublesome – that it would be easier for the planner-managers to determine the goals uniformly for the whole of the adult literacy learning program and impose these goals on every group. This would indeed be simpler and quicker – but with adults, this would be a major factor in destroying the effectiveness of the literacy learning program. Adults need to participate in determining both the ultimate, intermediate and even the immediate goals – and in revising these goals. This process should not be simply a ritualistic consultation with the participants; it should be real and on-going, subject to revision as the program proceeds.

See
1:4-5

For those of us who are implementing someone else's program, we can look at the goals which have already been set. These are likely to be vague and imprecise. We can try to make these agency goals clearer and more useful.
One first task would be to divide goals already given in the program into aims – goals – objectives (see table 6.1 above) and to try to fill in the missing elements in the hierarchy (especially milestones). Secondly, we could look at what measures are being asked for as signs that the goals are being achieved. It is very likely that these are vague, so that it may be possible for us to develop clearer measures for ourself. Thirdly, it will be advisable to discuss these goals with our supervisors, our facilitators, and with our local support groups and participants. Providing feedback to our agency on how their goals fit with the goals of the participants in our area is one of the most valuable activities of any middle level manager. It is possible – while accepting the goals already set for the adult literacy learning program – to interpret and implement these in different contexts.

Key Theme

For both kinds of programs, our basic advice in this matter consists of emphasizing the need for **discussion**. Discuss your goals with the participants, the stakeholders, and your own staff. Are you aiming at the right goals? (what are the *right* goals? whose goals are they?) And how can you implement these goals and assess progress towards them? The views of other stakeholders will be most useful.

Key Questions — Chapter 6

When setting the goals for our program, we need to ask ourselves:

What do we want the participants to achieve,
- by the end of the literacy learning program?
- and afterwards?
- Are these realistic?

How can we make these goals clearer?

How can we introduce intermediate goals and milestones which are locally appropriate and achievable?

How can we ensure that our goals match the varied motivations of the literacy learners?

What processes can we create to keep these goals under regular review?

Evaluation

As we have seen, evaluation is not something done at the end of the program. The review and evaluation of goals needs to be done from the beginning and continued during the whole program, and the same is true for all other aspects of the program. Evaluation is built in from the start and is continuous. So we ourselves will do it here at the end of the first stage of this training program, and at the end of the other stages.

You have now planned your program.

a) you have decided whether your main aim is to help people to learn literacy skills or whether you seek to help them to use their new skills in the various literacies which they already do and which they want to do better in their daily lives. This will determine how you regard the question of success (i.e. is success the numbers of those who complete the course or those who subsequently use their skills to enhance their quality of life?).

b) you have decided whether your program will work with existing development or community groups or with work places or with new groups of literacy learners

c) you have decided which of a number of approaches to learning literacy you wish to be used in your program

d) you have decided what you are going to look for as signs of the success of your program

e) you have worked out the aim, the goals and the learning objectives of your program.

You have done all this (we hope) in direct consultation with the other stakeholders, your partners in managing this program – with the participants if that is possible, or with the members of the already existing group; with the employers/managers of the work places; with the local community support group which has been created to help with the local aspects of the course; with any others who may be involved in the program.

Now review (i.e. evaluate) these decisions.

a) How can you (and your partners) judge whether they are the right decisions in your context? You will need to balance the demand from above (the funders of the program or the government policy makers who may drive this program etc) and the demands from below (the diverse goals of local participant groups).

b) Do you feel comfortable with the relationships which you have built up and with the decisions reached through these relationships?

c) How will you assess whether the other stakeholders feel comfortable with these relationships and decisions?

The real evaluation of whether this is an effective planning process will come after you have set the program up and it is running. Will it work? Will it meet the different desires of the participants, the groups, the local communities and/or the employers involved in it? For you and your program are part of a context, and your program needs to fit that context. This is what the next stage of this training program will deal with.

Part TWO

Resourcing the Program

In the second part of this training program, we will look together at how to resource the program.

General principles of resource management are followed by looking in particular at

- housing the learning group
- equipping this center
- the provision of funds for the program.

This is followed by discussions of the selection and support of the facilitators and of the provision of teaching-learning materials.

Throughout, we shall explore how far we can involve other stakeholders in these activities.

Again, you may use these sections in any sequence to suit your own local needs.

For those engaged in a more formal training program, such as a five-day training course, we envisage this will occupy one and a half days (see Appendix A).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Identifying and Mobilizing Resources

This section deals with identifying the resources needed for an adult literacy learning program. It asks where these may be obtained from. It explores ways in which the participants and the local community can be involved in sharing this task with the managers, and how far the community should be expected to provide some of these resources. We look in particular at

- *the provision of a meeting place for the learning group*
- *the provision of equipment*
- *and the funding of the program (whether the participants or the community should help to pay for the literacy learning program).*

Examples of other kinds of resources (the facilitators, and teaching-learning materials) needed are discussed in later sections.

Resource mobilisation is one of the major challenges for managers in order to ensure that the learning program is successful.

TRAINER:
METHOD:
Brainstorm;
poster session

ACTIVITY 7.1:

First, make a list of the resources that you feel will be needed to run a successful adult literacy learning program.

Do not over-emphasize financial resources. Ask yourself what the money is needed for. If you are able to do this with your colleagues, your mentor or with a support group, that would make it more comprehensive.

1. Identifying the Resources Needed

See
3:4-7

What we need for running any adult literacy learning program will of course vary according to the kind of program we are building and the objectives set for it from the start. Thus work-based groups will have different resource needs from a more formal adult literacy class; a program set inside another developmental project will again have different resource needs and opportunities.

The needs will also vary because of the nature of the geographical area we are in. For example, lighting facilities for evening meetings may in some circumstances be able to be drawn from electricity supplies, but if not, alternative forms of lighting will be necessary. You will need to review your context carefully.

Look carefully at the list above (Activity 7.1) to see how many needs relate to the kind of literacy learning groups you are dealing with; and which ones relate to the kind of area the program is taking place in. Feel free to add further resources as you think of them.

THE RANGE OF RESOURCES

It is likely that the list of resources you have built above (Activity 7.1) can be divided into three main groups:

Human resources such as facilitators, supervisors, local support groups or committees, trainers etc

Physical resources such as a meeting place, seating, lighting, a board for writing (blackboard or whiteboard), chalk or writing pens, teaching-learning materials (textbooks and other materials), stationery for the student participants to use, administrative materials such as an attendance register etc. There may also be items which could be called 'intellectual resources' – literacy guidebooks, handbooks on methods for the facilitators etc.

Financial resources such as money to remunerate the facilitators, for the salaries of the supervisors, to pay the trainers, to buy additional materials etc.

Try to see if your list above falls into these three groupings. Are there any other kinds of resources which you feel are necessary in your own situation?

You will find it useful to be as specific as you can and to put a time frame indicating when the resources will be needed and for how long. And it is not enough only to list the resources and their sources, but also to think critically about the process of acquiring them and to plan this process carefully.

You may also wish to draw a distinction between what is **essential** to the literacy learning program (i.e. without which, the program cannot run), and those things which are **desirable** but not strictly necessary for a successful learning program.

RAINER:

METHODS: Arrange posters under headings; or three groups, each one concentrating on one category. (It is likely that some answers may overlap, which provides the basis for further discussion)

ACTIVITY 7.2:

Look again at the list of resources you have identified in Activity 7.1 and placed under the three sub-headings of 'Human', 'Physical' and 'Financial'. Use the table below to try to identify where you could obtain these resources and who will help you. You may end up with a list as in the table. The items listed here are only examples: it is likely that your responses will be similar to these but not exactly the same. The format of the table can also be changed depending on the situation and the needs of the local context.

RESOURCES WE WILL NEED	POSSIBLE SOURCE(S)	WE WILL GET HELP FROM
Human:		
Physical: e.g. meeting place	local authority room	local officer/village leader
seating	participants bring their own mats	participants' families
lamps	participants make a contribution	literacy support group
stationery for participants	participants provide	village shop/families
Financial: remuneration for facilitator	providing agency	
SUPPORTING RESOURCES FROM	**POSSIBLE SOURCE(S)**	**WE WILL GET HELP FROM**
e.g. extension leaflets	extension service	local extension worker

Such lists can be drawn up in a participatory way. If we can involve as many members of the local community as possible in identifying and mobilizing these resources, the program is more likely to be successful. Local people are able to decide with us who should provide what kind of support.

See
1:8
3:12-15
Chap 10

Doing this will mean a change in the traditional role of the manager of adult literacy learning programs. Instead of deciding everything by themselves, managers will decentralize much of their work. One possible way is to form and maintain small groups which will jointly take decisions and accept and retain responsibility for these decisions. Managers engaged in this kind of activity will learn how to liaise more effectively with other interested groups and communities. And to do this, they will need to know more about what goes on in the different learning groups and among the different participants. This can be seen as a widening of their role, not a limitation.

2. Mobilizing the Resources

GETTING SUPPORT

As we have seen, we need to identify where these resources can be obtained and then to mobilize them. Clearly where we get them from will depend on the relationship we have been able to build up with the local community.

The key issue here is what is brought in to the community and what exists there already which can be used. Many agencies bring in everything because they find it easier and quicker to do so; but it does mean that the literacy learning program is seen to belong to the agency, not to the community; it is an outside intervention.

In almost all contexts, much will have to be brought into the village or urban area. And that will mean that the manager will need to relate to other people, such as senior managers in their own organization or other agencies. Managers are the bridge between the local community and the senior staff of their organization and at times other agencies or bodies. They need to be able to open the doors of the offices of superior staff to members of the local community and from time to time to be able to speak with the voice of the local community to these staff. And they will also need to speak with the local community in the name of these same central staff. That will mean two things:

- getting sufficiently close to both groups of people to be able to speak on their behalf; and
- developing the skills of advocacy.

The role of the managers in **advocacy** is very important. They will need to believe that this work is important and be able to urge it on their senior and peer staff and on workers with other agencies (including some government officials from time to time). We cannot deal with this aspect fully here: some managers may find it useful to attend a training workshop on advocacy to help them with this aspect of their work.

PARTNERSHIP IN RESOURCING

Throughout this training program, we have seen the importance of working closely with other bodies and persons – stakeholders in the adult literacy learning program. You may wish to refer back to Chapter 1, where 'participatory management' is discussed. Participation in management is not of course only with the local community; it also involves senior colleagues. It means working closely with other organizations – perhaps with other NGOs, with other government departments, with employers (especially in work-based programs) and other persons.

See
1:8

See
Chap 10
3:12-15

But the key element is of course working with the local community and as far as possible with the participants in the literacy learning group.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Brainstorm and then group discussion

ACTIVITY 7.3

You might care to consider some of the reasons why and when the local community can be asked to help with finding and obtaining the resources needed for the literacy learning program even when they can be obtained from outside. Discuss this with colleagues, your mentor, other trainees and others.

There are examples where literacy learning programs are managed entirely with the internal resources of the local communities, whether rural or urban. There are also examples where the program is fully dependent on support from the outside. It is in fact easier to find examples of the second kind of program than of the first.

But all the indications from the field suggest that the more the local community can be involved in the program, the more likely it is to be effective. And it may help to ensure that the literacy support program will continue long-term after the end of our short-term learning program. Part of the aim of the manager's work, then, is to explore how the outside dependency can be reduced and to see if more and more participatory approaches can be introduced. This will be an ongoing process, not something to be decided at the start and never changed.

JOURNAL ENTRY

ACTIVITY 7.4 :

Look at the case studies at the end of the manual and try to see how far the resources to support the literacy learning programs in these cases were generated and/or mobilized by the literacy learners themselves or by their communities, and how far they were brought in from the outside.

There are many reasons for involving the participants and the local communities in the program. This is not simply a matter of saving costs. Rather, it is a matter of building up local goodwill to the learning group, local support and commitment which will help the group when problems arise. The local community will feel that it is 'their' group, not an outsider's class. It will also help to build local capacity to manage their own activities.

There are several ways in which local support can be created and developed. In the case of working with existing local groups (women's groups, income-generating or other developmental groups, church groups etc), the machinery for involving the local community in the literacy learning program will already be there. In the case of work-based programs, it will be relatively easy to develop ways of working with the works' personnel on the literacy development program. But in the case of the more formal adult literacy classes, it is likely that some kind of machinery will need to be built. We may wish to work through the village leaders or the urban group leaders. We may wish to set up (or ask them to set up) a literacy support group (sometimes called a Village Education Committee). When younger learners are involved, many programs set up a parents' organization or a joint parents'and teachers' organization.

See 3:14

Mobilizing the resources for the new program is one of the most important ways of creating such a support group. Local people will often be willing to help to establish a new activity in their village or urban area. They can become engaged in identifying what resources are needed and where these should come from. And this need not be done only once; it can be an on-going process. It is possible to meet with them regularly during the program to look again at the question of the resources and other aspects of the work, to keep progress under review.

It may be useful to organize for such a group some orientation activities: some informal training in conducting meetings, keeping records, deciding matters, planning and carrying out activities. Visits to other working groups can be encouraged. Sending out newsletters, building networks of such local support groups, and holding meetings which several of them attend are significant ways of strengthening these support groups. There are many ways in which such support mechanisms can be developed and enhanced.

Increasingly, agencies are bringing together their learning groups. International Literacy Day in early September is a great excuse for such a gathering. Bangladesh frequently holds such rallies; and in Bombay, some 4000 literacy learners meet for a picnic in one of the city's park once a year. Such events help with motivation and confidence building, and enable groups to share ideas and experiences. The common interest of other groups is part of the resources for the program and can be mobilised by the managers and the local community support group.

ACTIVITY 7.5 :

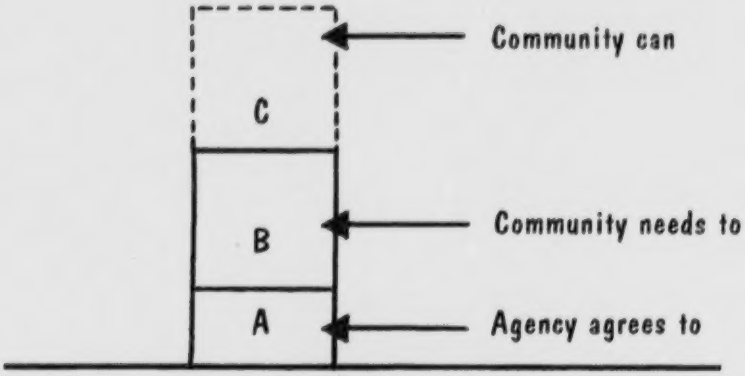
Again look at the case studies: how many of them involve the local community and how? Try to find as many different ways of working with local people as you can. Compare these with examples drawn from your own area.

JOURNAL ENTRY

Balancing the resources: One of the most difficult issues in creating adult literacy learning groups (and other kinds of local development groups) is to get the balance right between what the agency provides and what the local community can and should provide. It is clear from all the evidence from the field that some kind of partnership is needed between providing agency and local community. But exactly what form that partnership should take will vary.

The most common form of partnership is one which says that if the local community provides some of the resources, the external agency will provide certain other things; the two between them will provide enough to ensure that the program can go ahead. The community can then be encouraged to provide further resources which are not essential but which will help to make the learning program more effective. It is not for us here to set out what these items should be, or what the balance between them should be; that will always be a matter for local negotiation. But that there should be a balance seems to be clear.

FIG 7.1: PROVISION OF RESOURCES



- *If the community provides B, the agency will provide A; these two together will be enough to make sure that the program can run. The community can also be encouraged to provide C which will help to make it a more effective learning program.*

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As we have seen, there are two main models of adult literacy learning program. One sees the learning group like an adult primary school, in which a center is set up and the literacy learners are taken into a 'classroom'-type situation outside of the community to learn literacy from a primer or textbook. The other is to help the participants to learn their literacy skills in the community through the texts which are already existing in the community and through the literacy tasks which they find themselves faced with.

If we think of using the existing literacy activities for the learning program, then the focus changes from a school-type learning center to the community. And our survey will find that the community environments in which our programs take place have a number of activities and resources which will contribute to the success of the participant's work. In particular, there are other developmental activities in the neighborhood. Adult literacy learning groups are just as much development groups as are income-generation or social action groups or credit and savings groups, and they can relate to these other groups. Most villages and most urban areas have some kind of activity going on in them which have literacy activities attached to them. There are also the extension services. These can be invited to join the local support group. There are agencies like the Post Office which have many literacy materials in them. Throughout Bangladesh (and now in many other countries), there are rural banks (Grameen Banks); they cater especially for people with limited literacy skills and confidence.

See
2:13-17

All of these can be identified and their support be obtained most effectively through the local community support group. The adult literacy learning group can be fully integrated in this way into the activities of the community, not kept separate from these activities.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Games and socio-dramas

ACTIVITY 7.6:

Draw up a list of some of the items in the local environment which will be supportive of the literacy learning program. You may care to list these items under the same three headings listed in Activity 7.2. Discuss how to involve the local community in providing some of these resources.

- **Human resources** such as local administrative officers, school teachers, local extension workers etc.

- **Physical resources** such as the texts you can find in the clinic, the post office, the police station etc.

- **Financial resources** including any additional sources of funds which your literacy learning group may be able to draw upon.

Increasing local literacy resources in the community: One final point may be made here. As the program develops, it may be possible to help the local community to develop community literacy resources. There are examples in some countries of such activities. For example, a village library can be helped to become a small stationery shop where the participants and others in the village can buy what they need for their literacy activities – pens and paper, some local newspapers and magazines etc. In Bangladesh, one agency supplies (at cost) every literacy learning group with stamped envelopes for sale to its members and to others in the village, to encourage them to write letters. Some groups are selling booklets (for example, with local recipes) to their own community. In some places, loans have been made to facilitators to start a small shop to help them with their income-generation activities. In other places, women's groups engaged on making and selling school uniforms have now begun to sell stationery, pens and school exercise books also. Such an enterprise could form the basis of some of the credit and savings group activities, loans being made to a group member or small group to run such a shop. Even the literacy learning group itself could undertake such a task; it would supply the group with the motive for some of their literacy activities – keeping records of purchases and sales.

There are other ways in which the literacy resources of any village or urban area can be increased through the help of the literacy class and facilitator, the local support group and the other development bodies in that area. The manager and especially the supervisor could see this as one of the key tasks of running the program: for there is little point in strengthening the literacy skills of individual villagers if the literacy resources of the community are not also strengthened. These do not all need to be in the dominant literacies; they can also use local literacies as well. This can be seen as one other side of the work of helping people to use literacy outside of the classroom to improve their quality of life.

Try to think of other ways in which the literacy resources of your own area can be increased.

3. Three Examples

We can take three of the key elements of organising the literacy learning program to illustrate this discussion:

- providing the building to meet in;
- providing the equipment needed;
- and providing the funds.

1. HOUSING THE GROUP

Adult literacy classes often meet in a variety of places.

ACTIVITY 7.7:

Look at the case studies in this manual and compare the different places in which these programs have met to conduct their sessions with other places which you know of from your own experience. List them here: e.g.

- **church hall,**
- **primary school,**
- **administrative office etc.**

Add to this list: talk to other people to find out other locations.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
Brainstorm

Flexibility in the meeting place of a learning group is one of the characteristics of adult literacy programs today. But every literacy learning group needs a location and an agreed structure, where its day-to-day activities can be carried out, even if it is for a few months only.

The location will of course vary according to the type of learning group you are running. Most work-based literacy learning programs will hold their group meetings in the work place. Most existing community development groups will already have a set meeting place. But new literacy learning groups will need to find a suitable location, balancing out the convenience of the participants and the suitability of the place for teaching and learning. Sometimes the group will be able to use official premises free (e.g. offices or the local school). Sometimes they will need to rent a building (house or public building etc).

In many cases, this flexibility of location has made it possible for the meeting to be at a central point close to where most of the participants live, so that they do not have far to walk to meetings.

The location of the group meetings is one of the major factors in helping the participants and the community (rural or urban) to feel that they 'own' the learning

Adult learning groups meet anywhere. Note the decontextualized literacy being learned.
UNESCO/Dominique Roger

group, that it is their group. If meetings are held in the property of some other agency, some of the participants may feel that they are going out to someone else's literacy class. But if the meetings are held in a community center, there will be more chance that they will feel that they are going out to 'their' class.

This is why some agencies have encouraged literacy learning groups and the communities from which they come to provide their own literacy meeting place. In Bangladesh, for example, several NGOs have insisted that the provision by the community of some meeting place is the first essential step before any literacy class can be provided. A more or less temporary building, using locally available materials, is rented or even in some cases erected in or near the center of the village or in the urban area, at a location convenient for the participants. Such a literacy meeting room provided by the local community shows the commitment of the local community to the program. It can be used for continuing group meetings such as post-literacy activities or continuing education programs. Some have become small offices where village libraries are held or where savings and credit schemes or income-generating activities are pursued. There are many uses to which a literacy room can be put, such as a drop-in center.

See Chaps 11, 12

See 3:10

But this will not suit every community; and it will not be practical in many cases. But whatever the solution, it is important that this decision – like so many others – should be taken with and if possible by the local community.

2. EQUIPPING THE GROUP

ACTIVITY 7.8:

Look again at the list you drew up in Activity 7.1 on the resources required for running a successful adult literacy learning program. Identify the equipment items. Try to add to this: what will be needed to run the program fully? You can also see some of the possible ways to obtain them and who can support you in mobilizing this equipment.

JOURNAL ENTRY

We need to remind ourselves of the importance of reducing outside dependency; resources should as far as possible be generated from within the communities.

The possibilities of requiring the participants and their families to provide some of the materials are indicated above. For example, in some countries the participants are asked to bring their own mats for seating. Stationery is frequently managed by the participants themselves. In addition to this, other equipment may be obtained from elsewhere in the community – a blackboard from the school, for example. If the local headteacher is included on the community support group, there may be increased chances of getting support from the school for such an adult class.

Other equipment like chalk may be provided by the agency. Lighting is sometimes provided by the participants, at other times by the community, and at other times by the agency.

Clearly what and how much can be provided by the participants and their community will depend on the local context.

3. FUNDING

Some funds will be needed for several aspects of the program, to buy materials and especially to pay the rent of the meeting place, if a rent is required. These may come from many sources – donors, government, local trusts etc. In some areas, local authorities make grants to the literacy learning group, and even village councils may from time to time provide some funds; in Nepal, some Village Development Committees and District Development Committees have contributed financially to adult literacy learning programs.

But the main issue for anyone pursuing participatory management approaches is how far should and can the local community and the participants themselves contribute to the costs of the program directly – either by paying for some of the equipment and stationery or by making a regular payment to the program.

TRAINER:

METHOD:
formal debate

ACTIVITY 7.9:

Set down for yourself the arguments you can think of in favour of and against requiring the participants and the community to make direct payments towards the cost of the program.

Some of the arguments you may have listed might be as follows:

ADVANTAGES:

- their willingness to contribute is a sign of their interest in and commitment to the program
- field experience suggests that programs which require some contribution have a lower drop out rate than those where it is wholly free
- it is part of the cost-sharing approach to education today
- it promotes positive self-reliance attitudes, independence from the providing agency
- it helps to ensure the sustainability of the program
- *other reasons*

DISADVANTAGES:

- some of the participants may not have resources to make equal contributions with others
- it will make some of them feel uncomfortable
- it may limit access of 'the poorest of the poor' to the program
- *other reasons*

This issue is a matter of considerable debate. There are many different policies relating to the funding and support of adult literacy learning programs. Some agencies give some of the available funds direct to the learning groups; others channel all their funds through the local managers. Some even have different policies for different groups – there is no need for any agency to follow the same procedure in every case, providing there are clear principles which underlie the decisions being taken.

Discussing all these issues with the local groups and the community support groups is essential. It is important that they feel that they own some part at least of the program. And they may be able to help with fund raising. Some communities have their own fund-raising events, collecting donations, holding sales and mounting other kinds of events. In Thailand, some groups go round collecting used and no longer needed books, paper and pens/pencils etc for use by the literacy learners. What does seem to be clear is that the matter of participant and community contributions to the learning program can be discussed in the community and in the local support group, and the decisions can be taken jointly.

Key Questions—Chapter 7

When planning the resources for our program, we need to ask ourselves:

What resources will be needed?

How can we increase community and participant involvement in deciding what resources should be provided and where they should come from?

Should the community provide the meeting place?

How much of the equipment needed for the program should be provided by the participants or the community?

Should the participants or the community make any financial contribution to the program?

Chapter 8

Resourcing the Program: Selecting and Supporting Facilitators

This part of the training program will discuss the following issues:

- *identifying and selecting the facilitators*
- *training and supporting them in their work*
- *encouraging innovation and creativity*
- *involving the facilitators in planning and evaluation.*

Note: *throughout this manual, we use the term "facilitator" to refer to the person who leads the learning group. Other programs use different terms such as instructor, tutor, animator, teacher, literacy group leader etc.*

TRAINER:

It would be most useful if some local facilitators could attend this session of the training program

READER

It would be most useful if the reader could identify some local facilitators and talk this section through with them

1. Introduction

TRAINER:

METHOD: Group discussion and report back; flip chart compilation

ACTIVITY 8.1:

We would ask you to start this section by putting down here some thoughts on two questions:

a) what makes for a good facilitator?

b) what problems can you think of which might arise in relation to facilitators?

While it is clear that those users of the manual who are able to create their own program will be able to relate to the material in this section closely, it is our view that those users of this manual who are implementing an existing program and who may not be free to select their facilitators can nevertheless still review what happens in their program in relation to the facilitators, how these can be supported in their work, and which of the key questions at the end of this section will apply to their existing program.

See
1:4-5

2. Identifying, Selecting and Recruiting the Facilitators

Most programs have facilitators to lead the learning groups. There are a few programs which have no such facilitators, using peer-learning groups for help with literacy skill learning, but these are rare and their effectiveness not yet demonstrated.

IDENTIFYING LITERACY FACILITATORS

The identification of who should be facilitators will depend on two main things:

a) *the kind of program we are running.* A work-based literacy learning program will often carry with it certain specified persons to act as facilitators, persons with experience of that work-place. Existing development groups which are including literacy learning in their on-going activities may already have facilitators available – members of the group with more advanced literacy skills. Extension programs will often wish to use their own extension staff. Newly created adult literacy classes will need to identify and recruit literacy facilitators.

See
3:4-8

b) secondly, *the local situation and the cultural context of the participants.* In some contexts, women's groups may require a male facilitator, whereas in other contexts, women will not meet with a male facilitator. Gender issues are frequently important here, but so too are issues of age, class, caste and language etc (for example, in some places, older persons do not like young facilitators, while elsewhere, the opposite is true). The location of the learning group may also influence who is willing to act as a facilitator; the use of religious premises may help to determine who is available to act as facilitator.

Who selects? In some places, the local community selects the facilitator; in other places, the organisers make the selection. In Egypt, unemployed educated youth are selected by government, and trained and sent out into various local communities. In other countries, only local volunteers or persons selected by the local community are used in their own villages or urban areas.

Many different persons are used as facilitators. Some programs use the following persons:

- existing primary teachers
- students
- unemployed youth
- graduates from adult literacy learning programs
- local volunteers
- literate workers (in work-based literacy programs)
- *any others?*

RAINER:

METHOD: Brainstorm or poster session

ACTIVITY 8.2:

List here

a) some other issues which may affect the choice of facilitators; do any of these apply in your own area?

b) some other persons who have been used as facilitators; and indicate what kinds of persons are or will be used in your own program

The arrangements of the program may also determine who will be acceptable as facilitators. For example:

a) ***whether they will be employed or act as volunteers***. Will they be paid or not? Some programs use only unpaid volunteers in their spare time; others employ paid facilitators.

Payment of facilitators: There are many arguments for and against the payment of literacy facilitators. Some relate to motivation, arguing that paid facilitators will be more motivated (but they may be more motivated to the money than to the learning). On the other hand, some argue that unpaid volunteers will be more highly motivated, although others suggest that they will be less highly motivated, moving on to new paid jobs before the work of the literacy learning program is completed. Some make comparisons with agricultural and health extension workers who are paid, while others stress that adult literacy learning programs are quite different.

There are also arguments about whether facilitators should be paid by the local community or by the participants or by the providing agency (whether NGO or official body).

Some programs pay their facilitators on a sliding scale according to factors like the numbers of participants attending or completing the course, a form of 'payment by results'. Others have a flat rate payment throughout the whole program. And there are other financial devices. All of these are matters which need to be determined.

b) ***whether they will be working full-time or part-time***. Will they lead one learning group or a number of such groups? In some programs, adult literacy instructors are full-time employees, conducting several such groups every week. In other programs, the facilitators are part time workers, often with only one such group.

c) ***what formal qualifications (if any) are required to act as facilitator***. Many programs require some formal qualification or experience of formal schooling (eight or ten years of primary school); but there are some which do not require this, using instead experience and proven ability alone. Some programs use persons who have not had any experience of primary school but who have been through the same adult literacy learning programs.

d) ***how long they will be employed***. Some facilitators work only for one course and then are not used again – which some agencies see as a waste of experience. Other programs help the facilitators (especially those who become both experienced and expert) to continue to work on the program over many years (in one case in Bangladesh, a woman facilitator said she had been working for nineteen years as a facilitator). But it is important for you to recognize that most adult literacy facilitators do not have any career development expectations – and this often helps to reduce their motivation. They do not see how they can make any progress in this work.

e) ***whether there is more than one facilitator for each learning group***. Several programs now use unpaid teaching assistants, auxiliaries, helpers, and/or volunteers to assist the facilitator during the teaching-learning sessions. This is particularly useful, as it enables learning programs to use small groups rather than whole class teaching for learning. It encourages the facilitator and builds up local community support.

JOURNAL ENTRY

ACTIVITY 8.3:

Look at the case studies in the Appendix to see the different kinds of facilitators used in these programs. Find your own case studies and identify what kind of persons are being employed as facilitators in these programs.

We repeat that there is no one right way to run an adult literacy learning program. We have to decide these matters for ourselves in our own immediate context. But debating such questions will raise many fundamental issues relating to the program. Taking decisions on these matters can be seen not as a chore but as a valuable and exciting part of the work of planning the program and determining its goals.

SELECTING THE FACILITATORS

We will find it useful to do two things before we can recruit the facilitators.

See 3:14 7:7

The first is to establish clearly the **criteria** to be used for recruitment. We suggest that this will be most easily done if we can involve others in this activity – the members of the existing group or workplace or the local community through the literacy support group (Village Education Committee etc). Certainly the criteria should be made public, to avoid all pressure to employ unsuitable persons. You may wish to look back at Activity 8.1 about the characteristics of the 'good facilitator' at this point.

In an ideal world, facilitators would be selected as much for their qualities as for their capabilities and qualifications. For example, it would be helpful if the facilitator could be a role model – someone who engages in literacy activities in the course of her life (reading books, booklets and magazines; writing letters and other texts in her own family). The work of being a facilitator will itself involve several literacy activities. This is especially true of work-based learning groups or learning programs run in association with development or community groups. Again, it would be most helpful if the facilitator could show that she is continuing to learn in the course of her life; not that she knows all that it is necessary to know for being a facilitator but someone who continues to explore and discover new knowledge and to develop new skills.

The second is to draw up a **job description** for the work of the facilitator. This too is best done in association with local stakeholders, especially the community support group. One way to do this is to hold a workshop with a number of previous facilitators to enable them to outline what they found their work to consist of. The job description is likely to contain details of the time scale of the task – not only the face-to-face element but also the time needed for preparation; the kinds of activities to be undertaken; the length of the contract and the possibility of any continuation. You may wish to compare this with the contracts of other kinds of extension workers such as community development officers or workers with women's programs.

Such a job description needs to be open-ended, not rigid. Creativity and an innovative approach to the teaching of literacy skills should be encouraged, not discouraged.

ACTIVITY 8.4:

In association with some persons with experience of working as literacy facilitators, draw up a tentative job description for your own program.

TRAINER:

METHOD: comparative group work

The process of selecting the facilitators can now take place on the basis of the agreed criteria and the job description. We can look for persons who fulfil these criteria and are willing to undertake the work.

There are **two further questions for us to think about**:

a) What are we to do if there is a demand for a literacy learning group from a community but there is no suitable facilitator? Will we run the program with a less qualified and less confident facilitator or deny the demand? Can a facilitator be trained to do the job irrespective of their own personal qualities? Or do we 'import' a facilitator from a neighboring village/urban area?

b) What are we to do if local pressure tells us to use as a facilitator someone who appears to be unsuitable? This often happens, especially in programs where the facilitator is paid. The use of published criteria and an open process of selection, involving other support workers, may help to address this issue, but it is never easy to resolve.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Explore these issues, using role plays

ACTIVITY 8.5:

Write for yourself some notes on these two issues. Try to think of some other issues which might arise.

1. No suitable facilitators

2. Unsuitable facilitators

3. Other issues

RECRUITING FACILITATORS:

When recruiting someone to act as facilitator, it is important to share the job description with the prospective facilitator. You may find it useful to draft a letter setting out the terms of the contract. Since we would wish to encourage our facilitators themselves to engage in more literacy activities in their own lives through this work, reading such a letter and writing a reply would be relevant literacy activities for the prospective facilitator.

ACTIVITY 8.6:

Draft a letter of contract (it is more difficult than you think!).

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual work, then shared in small groups

3. Training Facilitators

Every adult literacy learning program regards the training of its facilitators as an essential part of its activities. Unfortunately, not every program does it well. In several programs, facilitators are leading literacy learning groups without any training at all, because for some reason they were not able to attend the training programs provided.

But training is vital for the success of every program. This is the one element which you cannot afford to save on. Training of facilitators needs to be done thoroughly and effectively – and repeatedly. We only have to think about all the training we have had and how important it has been to us.

Training is particularly important for the kind of literacy learning program we are suggesting in this manual, one which is aimed at the participants *using* literacy skills in their daily lives rather than one which is aimed at *learning* literacy skills through a textbook. If we concentrate on learning, the facilitators (and managers) will tend to use the primary school as a model (i.e. learn, not use). We want to explore how literacy is being used in the community and help the participants to join in these uses.

There will thus be two main elements in this training program – how *adults* learn as distinct from children, and secondly, what kinds of literacy uses are already existing in the community; what the participants want to do in terms of their own literacy activities.

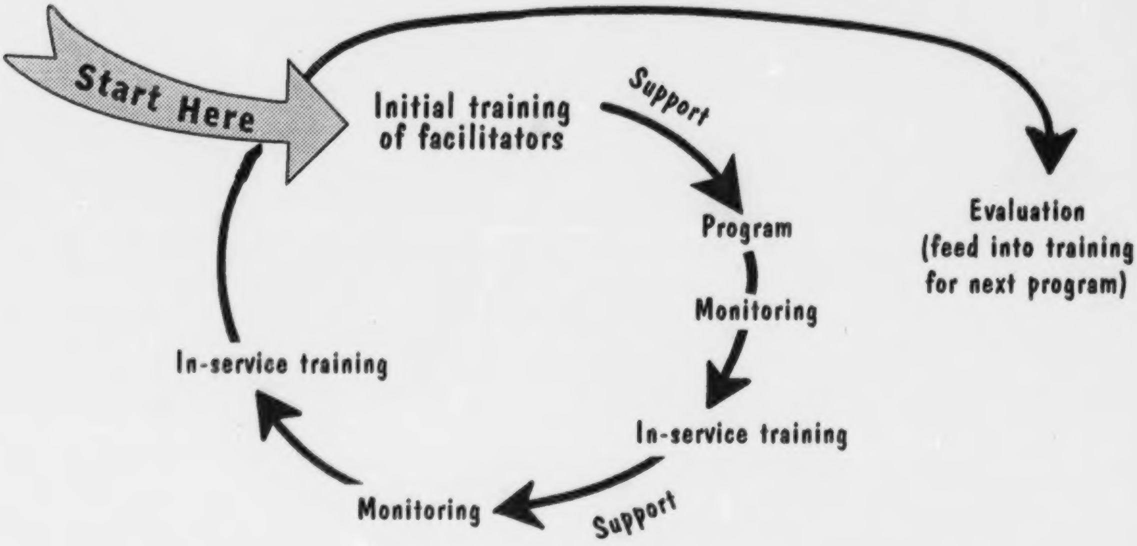
Nor can facilitator training be seen simply as a one-off activity on a 'single injection' model. A full program of training needs to be planned, taking in the **three main kinds of training –**

- pre-service
- in-service
- on-going support.

See Chaps 10, 5

The training plan can be related to the process of assessing the facilitators' needs, and to the monitoring and evaluation of the literacy learning program as a whole. As the monitoring reveals issues arising, so the on-going training program can seek to address those needs. On-going training is a response to formative evaluation.

FIG 8.1: THE TRAINING CYCLE



It will be useful if you can involve other stakeholders in planning and implementing the facilitator training and support program. Some of the best adult literacy learning programs have created a small Training Forum, bringing together some participants, facilitators, supervisors, community group members and outside trainers into a regular meeting to plan, implement and monitor the training of the facilitators. This model can be followed in other programs.

ACTIVITY 8.7:

Look at the case studies to see what forms of training are provided in these programs. Collect other programs of facilitator training.

RAINER:

METHOD: Small group and then plenary collection of findings

1. INITIAL TRAINING:

See Chaps 4, 9

The content of such pre-service training will depend to a very large extent on the approach to teaching and learning selected, especially whether the learning program is contextualized or decontextualized.

When planning the initial training program, some of the questions to be considered are as follows:

a) whether we plan to use an *outside agency* or to *provide the training ourselves*. There are issues of the control of training involved here. Who is to be used as trainer? Can we use experienced facilitators as trainers or will we use academics who may have little real experience in the field? The importance of the trainer having practical experience of literacy learning programs cannot be stressed too highly.

b) whether to use *residential or non-residential* training. Apart from financial considerations, there are the educational values of both residential (full-time concentrated study) and non-residential (life-related, using immediate practical experience) programs to be considered. There are also local cultural implications, especially for some women who often suffer most from the patterns adopted for training.

c) the *locality and venue* of training, whether local or central. Where to hold the training program can be decided in association with the trainees rather than by the providers alone.

d) the *logistics* of the training. For example, whether to pay the facilitators for attending or not; or whether to charge them small amounts for cost covering; whether to ask the local community for some of the costs etc.

e) the training *methods* to be used. These will often have an important influence on the kind of training being offered. For example, to use experiential training which will include visits or micro-teaching exercises, practice teaching sessions, and/or real teaching experience locally will help to determine the location of the training and the facilities needed.

It is often asserted that it is important that the training program should use the same kinds of teaching-learning methodologies as the facilitators are expected to use in their own literacy learning groups – for example, that it should not be all teacher-led; that it should use small groups and peer learning; that active learning methods and practical exercises should form part of the program; that it should not all be classroom-based but involve some outside activities, etc. Many of these things are done in initial literacy training of trainers (TOT). But it has also been noticed that in some cases these methods do not carry over into the literacy learning groups which are often very formal and rigid, using whole class teaching rather than small groups etc. More than one training session and a lot of ongoing support inside the learning group will be needed to change the attitudes of the facilitators towards active and flexible learning methods.

f) the training *curriculum*. For example, how far will the initial training be based on the job description? And what kinds of training materials will be needed?

TRAINER:

METHOD: groups of facilitators and trainees

ACTIVITY 8.8:

Write down some of the goals you would set for the initial training of the facilitators in a program aimed at the *use* of literacy in the community by *adults*, rather than at the learning of literacy skills in a classroom.

Evaluation of training: All facilitator training should be evaluated. The same criteria should be used to judge the effectiveness of the facilitator training as of the literacy learning program. But it is not often evaluated except by asking the facilitators how much they enjoyed it or found it useful; there is little systematic follow up to see if the activities and attitudes of the facilitators have changed after the training.

See
Chap
5

2. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

When the adult literacy learning program is run in stages, in-service training is normally provided between each of the stages. Some of this takes the form of refresher courses – that is, they repeat to the facilitators the earlier instructions. Other in-service training programs listen to and address the facilitators' new concerns. But even where there are no clear stages, some provision for further training is normally provided, often at monthly meetings when facilitators may attend a regional center for administrative and functional activities in relation to the program (e.g. receiving payments, making regular reports etc). Such training does not need to be a series of one-off events but can become a planned program of staff development for the facilitators.

The main problem with in-service training is its inability to develop flexible training activities that meet the varied needs of different facilitators. Some facilitators will run into special problems in relation to their learning groups; others will have issues of their own which they need to raise. Different facilitators will need different kinds of in-service training, building on their different experiences and meeting their different concerns. In-service training cannot be separated from on-going support which every literacy facilitator needs.

While there is value in **regular** in-service training sessions, sharing experiences, reviewing past performance and planning for the future, there is also a need for a range of more **specific** in-service training activities. Workshops related to special events or theme training are a valuable part of in-service training – for example, on working with local community support groups, on newly arising local events such as an outbreak of malaria or floods/drought, etc; or on special activities such as learner-generated material production etc.

Encouraging the facilitators to exercise some choice in their own training activities will usually help them to participate more enthusiastically. In addition to the in-service training provided by the managers of the program, it is also possible to assist the facilitators to attend workshops run by other agencies when these seem relevant to the work and interests of the facilitators.

Two themes may form an essential element in all such training:

a) ***literacy:*** in every event such as the above, an exploration of the literacy activities which go with the event itself can be used to encourage the facilitators to think more about literacy and the way it is used in their own society. The letters of invitation; the information sheets sent out; the teaching-learning materials used. Activities in the training program such as flip chart preparation, daily diaries, etc, are all literacy activities that can throw light on their literacy teaching.

b) ***gender and power:*** analysing the gender relationships in the local community, helping the facilitators to become more aware of gender and power relationships, and helping them to discuss how they can help their own participants to explore such issues meaningfully will need to be included. The gender and power balance among the facilitators and among the supervisors and managers will provide case studies of the wider society.

The cost of training: Such training will cost money. Many programs say that they would wish to do more training of facilitators and other staff (e.g. supervisors) but they do not have the money for this. It is widely recognized that a larger budget for training should be made available, although this is not always easy to arrange. Donors are often reluctant to include significant finances for such training. But if this training can be regarded as a development program for the facilitators themselves, with clearly set targets in terms of skills and confidence development and a fuller program of evaluation of this training, it might be easier to persuade donors to make more money available for staff training.

Every adult literacy learning program should earmark significant funds for the training of the facilitators. Without such a budget line, the program will be as ineffective as if there were no money for buildings, for equipment, for teaching-learning materials etc. Training is not a luxury; it is a stark necessity, without which the program will fail.

3. ON-GOING SUPPORT

Many literacy facilitators feel a sense of isolation. They often work on their own, with one literacy learning group. This is less true of those facilitators engaged on literacy learning programs which are built into existing community development groups or which are work-based, where other activities are also going on. But even these may feel isolated. They lack the sense of belonging to a larger service which most primary school teachers have, of being part of a whole program.

See
1:12
4:5
9:12

It is therefore important for literacy learning program managers to help the facilitators to obtain on-going support in their work in addition to the planned program of in-service training. One way is to encourage the facilitators to build their own support **networks**, identifying those persons to whom they would go when they have problems. A regular **newsletter** (which the facilitators can themselves help to write) would be a valuable network builder. Visits to other literacy learning centers will provide food for thought and discussion. One of the key roles of any manager is to ensure that communication within his/her program is flowing efficiently and regularly.

We shall look below at the role of the supervisor and of the other organisational staff in providing on-going support to the facilitators. Most supervisors visit learning groups regularly, but their visits often take the form of inspections rather than support – such visits are often feared by the facilitators rather than looked forward to. It may be possible to change this relationship towards a more positive one.

See
10:11

Apart from meeting the supervisor, each facilitator can meet informally with other nearby facilitators to share experiences and to discuss issues relating to their work. This has been shown in several contexts to provide a great source of learning to the facilitators. And in building up their own support network, there are also the members of the local community support group, chosen persons who can become mentors for facilitators, other development workers who live nearby or visit regularly, and many other persons who can become part of each facilitator's personal support network.

See
1:11-12

4. TRAINING: CONCLUSION

Training then is an essential part of every adult literacy learning program. A new attitude is needed here on the part of managers. As we have suggested, the facilitators can be seen as a development group of their own, the agency working with them to help them to develop themselves. Just as development agencies provide some groups of men and women with training for income-generation activities or health activities, so the agencies need to provide training for some men and women to become literacy facilitators. This is in itself a development goal. Every good manager is concerned with the personal development of those who work within the program.

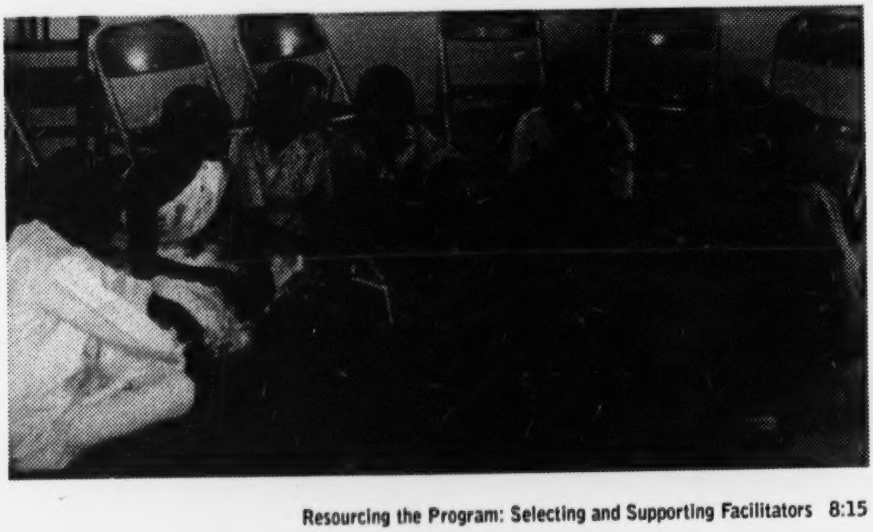
ACTIVITY 8.9:

Draft an integrated training and development program for your chosen facilitators including

- in-service training events of your own
- other workshops they could attend
- on-going support and networking

RAINER:

METHOD: Visiting facilitators and trainees do this separately and compare findings



Training of facilitators, Meppur, India. Alan Rogers

4. Promoting Effective Facilitators

Encouraging the facilitator to be creative:

An important part of running an adult literacy learning program is to encourage the facilitators **to experiment, to innovate**. Teaching is a dynamic process, an interaction between teacher and learner. It cannot follow set rules, for every learning group and every learner, especially adults, differ. It is not just a matter of implementing regularly and mechanically teaching-learning approaches the facilitators have been told to use. They need to be encouraged to create new learning opportunities for their participants, to use different approaches to meet different learning needs. Above all, they need to have their **confidence** built up, not to be criticized to the point where they lose their sense of self-worth. They will work better if they are made to feel special (some programs give them a distinctive badge to wear).

But in order to be creative in the face of the different needs of the participants, the facilitators will need to develop the skills of listening – listening to the participants, to the local community support group, and more generally to the social environment of which they form part. This too is part of the role of the manager, not only to boost their confidence to be creative, but also to help them to become responsive to the changes in their own immediate contexts.

Helping the facilitator to monitor the program:

And this will also mean that the facilitators will need to monitor and evaluate their own learning group carefully and regularly. They will need to determine for themselves whether their teaching is being effective, not to rely on outsiders to tell them that. They will need to assess their own teaching approaches and to adjust these as they go along. In this, of course, they will need some help from the networks we hope they will build up for themselves – people they can talk to and listen to.

Monitoring and evaluation are discussed in more detail elsewhere. Here we note that the facilitator will need help in looking at

See Chaps 10, 5

- the learning achievements of different literacy learners in their groups
- the behavioral changes in the participants, what they are now doing differently from before
- the changed attitudes and perceptions of learners, not only in relation to literacy activities but more generally.

ACTIVITY 8.10:

Write a few notes on what you will ask the facilitators to look for as *signs* of

- the learning achieved by the participants?
- participant behavioral changes?
- the changed attitudes and perceptions of participants?
- increased uses of literacy in the daily lives of the participants (and in their own lives)?

RAINER:

METHOD: Four groups, each taking one theme

How monitor and plan? The facilitators then can help with this process of monitoring – through keeping careful records, through watching for agreed indicators, through writing of regular reports, through planning new approaches. Training in writing reports and in planning will thus have to be provided.

It has been argued in some contexts that such a program is too ambitious for the facilitators currently being used in many of the existing adult literacy learning programs. But the ambitious nature of the proposed facilitator training can itself become a target for these persons – i.e., that by the end of the literacy learning program, the facilitators will have developed the skills and confidence to monitor and evaluate their own teaching-learning groups more effectively. Facilitators as well as the literacy learners need to grow during the program. Part of this training program can be done initially through discussions between facilitator and supervisors/managers or through groups of facilitators meeting together, before written reports are developed.

And while it is true that many facilitators and other field workers are very busy and fit this work in between other activities, it is possible that some (perhaps many) will be willing to engage in further training in monitoring and evaluation of their literacy learning groups if they feel it will help them with other tasks.

See
10:10-14

The preparation by the facilitators of monitoring reports on their own literacy learning program is of course only the start of a new phase. Such reports will be used, not only by the managers and supervisors, but by the facilitators themselves to review their own activities. We can help the facilitators to learn from their own reports in order to develop their own program.

In this way, the facilitators will be helped to develop a process of critical reflection on their experience. Their reports should not just be factual, simply describing what happened and when, but critically reflexive – outlining what went right and what went wrong and why. One useful tool is what has been called the SWOT analysis method: assessing the

- strengths of their learning program, what goes well with the participants
- weaknesses of their program, what seems to be ineffective
- opportunities for new kinds of activities in the learning group
- threats, the barriers which prevent the program from being effective (some people prefer the word 'limitations' here – SWOL).

But there are other ways of helping the facilitators to be critical of their own work and to strive to do better all the time. It is part of the task of the managing team to provide training and other help to the facilitators to develop such critical approaches to their work. Again this may take a long time – but this is part of the development of the facilitators themselves.

Key Theme

We can thus see that the facilitators are partners in this enterprise, not just implementers of our program. They need to share in the planning as well as in the implementation and evaluation of the program, and in the development process itself. They need to feel that it is *their* program.

The role of the facilitator, Pakistan. WEPA/Lahore

Key Questions—Chapter 8

When organizing the facilitators for our program, we need to ask ourselves:

How will our facilitators be chosen – the criteria and the process?

How will our facilitators be trained?

How will we plan for our facilitators to be supported?

How will we help our facilitators to develop their work further?

Which parts of our management activities are we willing to share with the facilitators?

Chapter 9

Resourcing the Program: Teaching-Learning Materials

This training session deals with the teaching-learning materials which the facilitator and the literacy learning group will need to help the participants to develop their literacy skills. It outlines the wide range of such materials, describing the 'special' texts created for learning and the 'ordinary' texts produced for use in everyday literacy activities. It takes the view that

- *a combination of texts should be used, not just the literacy textbook (primer) alone,*
- *and that all of these texts should be used in multiple ways.*

It ends by suggesting that part of our task is to help the participants to develop the skills of critical analysis of these texts.

Note: It is important to understand that this session is not concerned with the training of the facilitators to use these texts in the classroom; and it is not concerned with training in how to write teaching-learning materials. The aim of this session is to help the managers to resource the literacy learning program adequately.

TRAINER:

We suggest that the visiting facilitators might be requested to stay for this training session as well; they will have much to offer

The task of any manager and supervisor is to ensure that all the teaching-learning materials which the facilitators and participants require are available to them during the program. Here we are mainly talking about texts, not videos and other kinds of teaching-learning materials; but if such additional materials can be made available, the learning program will be more effective.

TRAINER:

METHOD: this may be done as a personal exercise and the notes kept and referred to throughout this session

ACTIVITY 9.1:

In this box, write down what you mean by the term "literacy materials" and give some examples from your own experience.

1. Range of Teaching-Learning Materials

See Chap 2

See Activity 2:18

In the training session on **What do we mean by Literacy?**, we saw that the term 'literacy materials' is frequently now used to refer to those community texts (found, brought-in and created) which are used in every-day life in literacy events and literacy practices. We suggest that you should look again at the above section. You could also look at the literacy texts you have collected and brought with you to the training program (Activity 2.6). They will illustrate this meaning of the term 'literacy materials'.

But other writers use the term 'literacy materials' to mean the specially prepared texts intended to help the participants to learn literacy skills. For them, the term 'literacy materials' does not refer to found texts but to the literacy textbook (primer) and to the special supplementary texts written in the dominant literacy to help literacy learners to develop their literacy skills. *Look at the case studies to see how they use the term.*

Because there are two meanings of this term, we need to make it clear that, in this section, we are talking about **teaching-learning** materials, that is, all those texts which can be used for teaching and learning literacy skills. We shall refer to the ordinary literacy texts which are found in every community as well as to the primers, and show how they also can be used for learning literacy skills.

We have already recognized that some of the users of this manual (and some of the trainees in our training programs) are free to create their own program, to decide these matters for their own programs. Others of us however are not; we already have prescribed texts for learning. The purpose of this training session then is two-fold: to encourage the former to decide what kinds of teaching-learning materials their programs will need and to identify where they will get these from, and to help the latter to review what kinds of teaching-learning materials their programs already use and to see if they can suggest ways in which these materials can be supplemented and different ways in which these set texts can be used.

See
1:4-5

ACTIVITY 9.2:

Looking again at the literacy materials you have collected in the field and brought with you to this training program and at the materials you have seen used in the classes you have visited,

a) indicate the main kinds of materials you have seen in the classes

b) how did the participants react to these materials?

c) which of these materials were preferred by

  – the participants?

  – the facilitators?

d) which were not used?

What can you see as the main value and the main challenges of using these texts in the program?

TRAINER:

METHODS: Plenary – sort material into categories and then debate value of each

We have already seen that in every context, there is a range of texts which are available. Many of these can be used to help adults to learn literacy skills. We can divide these texts up as follows:

1. Special Literacy Learning Materials: that is, texts which have been specially prepared to help adults and children to learn literacy skills. These can be divided into two main groups:

a) textbooks and similar literacy learning materials

b) supplementary literacy learning materials, such as easy readers etc.

2. Ordinary Literacy Materials: that is, texts which have not been prepared for the learning of literacy skills but which are used in daily literacy tasks. Again, these can be divided into two main groups:

a) those which have been designed to help people to learn things such as farming or income-generating skills or health matters. These are often called 'extension' or 'development' materials or 'information texts'.

b) those which are in general use like bank forms, election posters or food packets etc: these are often referred to as 'real' literacy materials.

Note: sometimes different terms are used for these different kinds of materials; but we have followed the terms used by many other agencies (see Fordham et al 1995).

We need to note that these are not always clear-cut categories. Sometimes these texts overlap. For example, some literacy primers contain material relating to health; many of the supplementary materials relate to farming or income generation. It is not always easy to sort texts clearly into one category or another. But we are talking here about what is the *main purpose* of the text – is it for *learning* or for *use*? and is its *main* aim for the learning of literacy skills or for learning other things?

ACTIVITY 9.3:

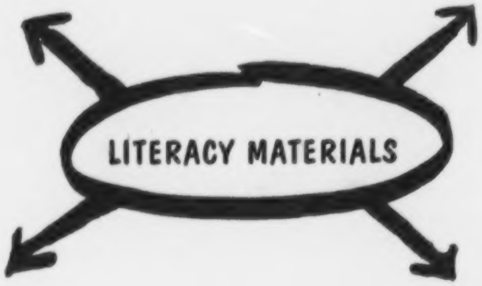
In the diagram below, give some examples from your own life of each of these categories. Start with the materials you have seen used in classes; then the material collected during the field visits; then any others which you can think of.

SPECIAL LITERACY LEARNING MATERIALS

- primers
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

SUPPLEMENTARY LITERACY LEARNING MATERIALS

- easy readers
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



EXTENSION/DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS

- agricultural booklets
- AIDS poster
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

"REAL" LITERACY MATERIALS

- post office form
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Fill in some of the blank spaces above.

See
2:6

We have already noted the distinction between 'found texts' (those that already exist in the social context), 'brought in' texts, and 'created' texts (that is, those which were written in the course of some activity). Some of the texts you have listed above will thus be 'found', some will need to be 'brought in', and some can be 'created'. Which texts fall into which category will vary from context to context.

ACTIVITY 9.4:

Looking at your own list, see if you can identify which of the items you listed are found in your own context, which need to be brought in and which can be created.

	FOUND	BROUGHT IN	CREATED
Special: textbooks			
Special: supplementary			
Ordinary: developmental			
Ordinary: "real"			

TRAINER:

METHOD: individual exercises or small groups using the experience of the visiting facilitators

Mixed texts: From the examples you have collected, you may be able to see that many of these ordinary texts are mixed in their format. They often combine writing with reading material (e.g. post office forms), and they often combine visual material with written text (e.g. newspapers).

2. Choice of Teaching-Learning Materials

There are then many kinds of texts – special and ordinary materials, found texts, brought-in texts and created texts – which can be used to help adults to learn and develop their literacy skills. Which texts to use for learning is something which those who plan literacy learning programs need to make a decision about.

The decision will be different according to

a) ***the kind of group which we are working with***. As we have seen above, some of our groups will be based in places of employment; others will be based on existing groups which are engaged in a specific task. In these cases, the texts to be used for learning literacy skills can come from the activities of these contexts. Work-based literacy learning groups will sometimes learn their literacy skills through texts found at work (including such things as health and safety notices). Task-groups will be able to learn their literacy skills through texts associated with those tasks.

See
3:4-8

b) ***the kind of teaching-learning approach adopted***. As we have seen above, several different approaches can be used to learning literacy skills. Programs using the Language Experience Approach will use more texts written with and later by the participants; those based on the Whole Language Approach will use more 'real' literacy materials. Programs which adopt a more formal approach such as phonics or letter recognition will use more 'special' and supplementary materials. We have suggested above that programs might use several different approaches and not just one approach, and therefore these programs will use several different kinds of materials.

See
Chap
4

1. SPECIAL MATERIALS

Most literacy learning programs tend to start with special learning materials, texts which have been specifically prepared to help groups of adults to learn literacy skills. Most of these are based on primary school textbooks, adapted for adults by the inclusion of subject matter which the writers believe will interest adults. These are of varied nature. Some are rather patronising to adults, treating them as if they do not know anything (see above where we discuss the way in which illiteracy is often unconsciously equated with ignorance). Some of these special learning materials assume that everyone will be interested in certain subjects; that all women (for example) must be interested in children or cooking. These texts are often written by 'experts' (academics, especially educationalists) and/or journalists (specialists in writing); but despite this, they are often felt by the participants to be not suitable.

See
3:7-8

You need to consider a number of factors when deciding about the textbooks to be used: for example,

a) **their availability**: where can they be obtained? how much will they cost? Some primers come as a single text; others come in a set of graded readers. If we are using a series of texts, it is important that we make sure before the program starts that the follow-on texts will be available *when they are needed*: the late arrival of textbooks has often demotivated a literacy learning group. That is one of the key tasks of the manager of a literacy learning program.

b) **their accessibility:** that is, can the participants 'access' the contents easily? Does the subject matter really lie within the current or past experience of this group of participants? Does it fit in with their current concerns? There may be little point in a drought-ridden area in providing a text discussing floods (or vice versa), or in urban literacy learners reading about cattle (although some participants may wish to read about situations which are different from their own). Are these materials really felt by the participants to be suitable for *their* interests? The teaching-learning texts need to be appropriate to the learning group.

How should these special materials be used for learning literacy skills?
Once we have obtained a set of primers and perhaps a set of supplementary materials, we will need to encourage the facilitators and the group to use these textbooks fully in their work. It is not simply a matter of working through the book, page after page. There are multiple uses of these texts. Each page can be used as the basis for discussion. Other material relating to the topic of the lesson can be collected by both the facilitator and the participants (for example, newspaper articles about the subject). The participants can be encouraged first to talk about and then to write about the topic, and to learn literacy skills through such activities. The primer is only the basis of the learning program; it is not the learning program itself.

Learning literacy by compiling a rural newsletter, Madagascar.
UNESCO/Dominique Roger

ACTIVITY 9.5:

List here some of the different ways in which the primer and supplementary reading/writing materials can be used.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Small groups take examples and report to the full group

WRITING: One of the safest ways of ensuring that our texts arrive on time and that they are really appropriate to the individual learning group is to get the participants to write these texts themselves. These texts are sometimes called *Learner-Generated Materials* or *Locally Generated Materials* (LGM), but the activity itself is best thought of simply as 'writing'.

See 4:6

It will be important that the participants keep a balance between reading and writing in their work. It is sometimes said that literacy learning groups cannot write texts – they must learn literacy skills first and then use these skills. But this is the traditional notion of learning – learn first, then do. As we have seen, much learning is done through 'doing'. For example, most people learn cycling by riding a bicycle, they learn to make things by making them. The same is true of literacy skills – people can learn to read by reading texts; they can learn to write by writing their own texts. And many groups have demonstrated that adults can write their own texts (Auerbach 1992; Mace 1995).

See 2:10-11 6:15

Such writing takes many forms. Sometimes the participants choose keywords which are then written (first by the facilitator but later by the participants themselves) on flash cards. Sometimes they select the names of the students and of places and buildings in their immediate neighborhood. Sometimes the words come from discussions. These are words which carry a lot of meaning to those participants, and they can thus not only provide literacy learning uses but also serve as the basis of discussion. These are the so-called 'Generative' or illustrative words – they generate interest and debate and insights, as their meaning is unpacked by the group. This approach was popularized by the work of Paulo Freire, who urged his facilitators to combine the words with pictures which illustrated the theme and which formed the basis for discussion – but not all

See 4:6-7

See 4:7

facilitators feel that they can draw well enough for this purpose. Sometimes these words come from PRA exercises (see, for example, the REFLECT approach described above); the participants decide through PRA what kind of society they live in and what kind of society they want to help create, and use these ideas for choosing their key words for learning literacy skills.

On the other hand, some writing takes the form of stories, local histories, recipes, poetry or other pieces which the participants plan for themselves. At first, these may be spoken by the participants and then written down by the facilitator (the Language Experience Approach of Chapter 4); later as their skills develop, they are often written by the participants themselves. Some ambitious writing projects have been run by adult literacy learning groups, such as a local news-sheet or magazine or even a small book which the group has published in their own locality.

See 4:9-10

See 2:10-11 4:2-3

Most primers and some locally generated teaching-learning materials are based on the 'keyword' learning approach we have seen earlier. Some primers are based on the recognition of letters or sounds, building up different words from these letters and syllables. This is a traditional way of learning used in many primary schools. Most *adults* however learn literacy skills through recognizing whole words and their meaning in their real context.

2. ORDINARY MATERIALS

See 2:9-11

See 1:8

See 2:11

There are several reasons why it is helpful to use ordinary materials in literacy learning groups. As we have seen when discussing the aims and objectives of the program (which we set as seeking to help the participants in our learning groups to use literacy in their daily lives), bringing ordinary materials relating to the various local literacy tasks which the participants want to do in their own lives into the learning group will help to make the learning really relevant to each of them. We have suggested that the biggest problem we shall encounter is that of transferring the use of the dominant literacy skills learned inside the learning group out into daily life in the community. Bringing the ordinary literacy tasks which the participants wish to undertake into the classroom is both easier and more effective than trying to persuade the participants to take the school-based literacy they have been learning (the primer etc) out into the community.

As we have seen, 'ordinary literacy materials' are of two main kinds – extension materials and 'real' texts.

a) **Extension (i.e. information) materials** can be used, especially by groups which are engaged on a specific learning task. We give one example from Nepal:

Learning to read sewing patterns, Bangladesh.
Alan Rogers

> **"...a group of women...wanted to learn how to sew. When they were given a sewing manual and told they needed to read it before they could learn to sew, they lost hope. [They were told that] in order to read the sewing manual, they would have to take a literacy class. They felt that by the time they had learned to read well enough to understand the sewing manual, their interest in sewing would be gone. Literacy was seen as a barrier to their goal, because they and their teacher assumed that reading was a prerequisite to all forms of learning.**
>
> **...Why should these women wait to learn sewing after reading? Why can't the sewing manual be adapted for use as a literacy [learning] text? Why can't the sewing class serve as motivation for the literacy lessons? It can, if we open our minds to new ways of teaching reading and writing." (Dixon and Tuladhar p5)**

Another example is the use by farmers in Sri Lanka of leaflets on pest control for learning literacy skills (ASPBAE 2000). Such extension material, chosen by the participants as being what they wish to read, will help them to develop their skills and keep them motivated.

b) **Real literacy materials** based on real literacy tasks in the community can also be used. It is impossible here to give a list of the full range of such texts, because they will vary from context to context. But we can point out that programs have been using material such as health cards, fertiliser bags, government forms and notices, magazines and sale catalogues, election posters, bank documents and advertisements to help participants learn literacy skills. These are of course almost always in the dominant literacy, but they can be related to the local literacies which also exist. Such materials can be collected by both the facilitator and the participants and brought into the learning group for use in many different ways. We can give one or two examples of this approach.

> **"In the program LABE (Literacy and Adult Basic Education) in Uganda, the women brought in health census forms and filled them up in class, one for each family represented,...one student helping another in a co-operative way. This was what concerned them at that time. In Nigeria, it was signs and notices in the market." (Rogers 1999)**

In the Philippines during the elections, election material was used including the voting forms:

> **"the learners all went to the polling booth to vote. They were excited to vote without assistance from anyone...In fact, one learner took 45 minutes to complete the ballot, but the others did not mind and were just too happy for him." (ASPBAE 2000)**

Some of these 'real' literacy materials may need to be adapted to the participants, but this can often be done by the participants themselves:

> **"In one instance in Bangladesh, a group of women...said they wanted to work with a Marriage Registration Form. But after a time they indicated that the form was too complex, and that the print was too small for them. It was possible in this case to encourage the group and the facilitator to try to re-write the form in simpler language, to debate the need for all the different kinds of information required on the form, and to make representations to the local registration office about the usefulness of this form in its present format to the persons it was intended for." (Rogers 1999)**

The manager of the literacy learning program can help in the identification of such materials. These found texts can be collected by both the facilitator and the participants. It may be possible to encourage the facilitator to take the participants out of the classroom into the community to survey and collect such materials and to discuss them, often *in situ* (for example, posters or graffiti written on the walls).

Some of these ordinary materials can be collected to coincide with the topics being discussed in the textbook. Others may be collected because of immediate issues in the neighborhood, such as a local fire or flood, or an outbreak of an epidemic, and so on. This is a task that the manager and especially the supervisor can help with.

ACTIVITY 9.6:

It would be useful if you could spend some time thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of using ordinary materials in class. You could set them down as follows:

STRENGTHS:	WEAKNESSES:
• meaningful literacy learning	• facilitator needs more support, guidance, training
• some real materials can be re-written	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

RAINER:

METHOD: trainees write suggestions on paper, then pinned up under headings

How should these ordinary texts be used in the literacy learning group? We do not plan to discuss this issue fully here because this is not a manual for facilitators but for managers. But there are some issues which will concern these managers and the supervisors.

One is the problem of obtaining multiple copies for the participants to use. An answer to this is to encourage the participants themselves to copy out these texts, especially the short ones. But in some places it may be possible to provide some photocopying facilities to the facilitators.

The materials can be discussed and perhaps debated, looking at them carefully: who wrote them? who were they intended for? are they effective? Some of these materials such as forms and advertisements can be re-written in the words of the participants. There are many ways they can be used in the learning group. The task of the manager is to encourage the facilitators to be experimental in this respect.

Simple and complex words: It is often suggested that these texts are not suitable for beginners, that adults (like children) need to start with simple words and then progress to more 'difficult' words. But many tests in the field show that this is not true. Indeed, in many languages, the simple words are often more difficult for adults to learn, to separate from other words which look or sound very much the same (an example in English is 'their' and 'there' which many adults find difficult to distinguish: *try to find a similar example in your own language*).

Recent research on this is very interesting. 'Difficulty' is apparently not related to the word or sentence length or complexity – there are no universal 'levels' of literacy. Instead, 'difficulty' would seem to be related to how far the reader knows the background of the subject. Thus for example, farmers will tend to be able to read complicated texts and 'difficult' words relating to farming because the subject matter lies in their experience and they use the words regularly, but they will find that they cannot read 'easy' texts relating to fishing or shoe-making. Learners (both adult and children) will learn so-called 'difficult' words (i.e. complex words) very easily if these words mean something to them and if they use these words in their daily lives regularly or need to use them to accomplish some task. As Freire pointed out, if you really feel angry about your 'landlord' and your 'money-lender', you will learn to read these words very quickly, however complex they may look on the page.

But some of these texts may need to be mediated to the participants. For example, they may not match the participants' skills, confidence or experience and therefore prove difficult for them to cope with. Again, the lay-out and design, the size of print, the words and sentences used, etc. may all be unfamiliar and prove obstacles to the use of these materials. This is where the role of the facilitator as mediator of texts can best be seen. Also, other participants who may have more direct experience of such texts or their subject matter may be able to help; not all the learning resources of the group lie in the facilitator.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual or small group activity; or demonstrations/ micro-teaching

ACTIVITY 9.7:

Take any piece of ordinary text and try to work out how it can be useful for helping adults to develop their literacy skills.

3. Combination of Materials and Methods

What seems to become clear from this is that it would be an advantage if a literacy learning group could use different approaches, not just one approach; different materials, not just one set of materials; and different methods. One role for managers is to help the programs to reduce their dependency on one set of materials and methods.

1. USING MULTIPLE LITERACY MATERIALS

Using ordinary literacy materials in our literacy learning groups will raise questions about how they can be related to the textbook.

We have noticed above that the difference between the two kinds of texts is that the textbook is **decontextualized** – it is general in nature, it applies to all the other learning groups in the area, while the ordinary materials will be more **contextualized** – they will come from the immediate neighborhood and will be chosen by the participants and the facilitator, so that every group will have a different collection of texts to work on And this raises the issue of the balance between these two different kinds of learning materials.

See
4:3-14

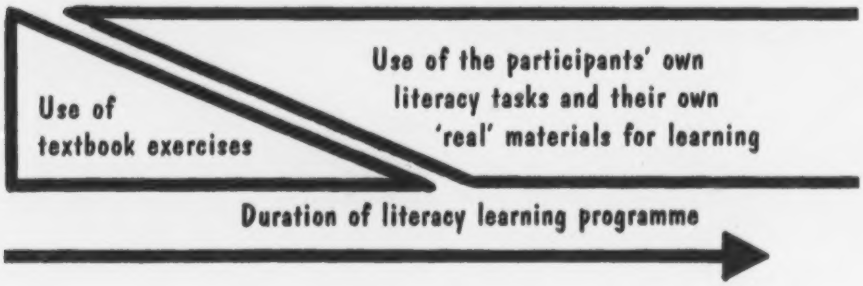
We have also seen that some ordinary materials can be collected according to the subjects being discussed in the textbook. In this case, the textbook is seen as the primary source, and the ordinary texts are seen as 'supplementary' materials. This is one way.

See
9:12

But there will be other times when the ordinary materials will form the main focus of the learning program rather than the textbook, because of some local issue or concern like a flood/drought or an election. The facilitators will need to be responsive to the interests of their group, flexible in their approach. And the supervisor too can encourage the group to discuss and to learn what they want to learn.

One way to develop a balance between the two kinds of learning texts which has been found to be effective in several programs is to create an overlap between the two kinds of teaching-learning materials. It will often be useful to start with the textbook or the flash cards, with generalised materials and then to move increasingly onto ordinary or real texts. But real texts can be added to the primer right from the start. As a program in Senegal shows, it is possible to "expose the participants to real texts from day one and encourage them to create texts. Because they are familiar with the texts' contents, reading comes more easily" (Guttman 1995 p14). At first, a small part of each learning session can be spent on the participants' chosen literacy tasks; most of the time will be spent on the textbook. But as the learning program goes on, the amount of time spent on the textbook decreases and the amount spent on local literacy tasks increases. The diagram which follows shows the changing relationship as the group sessions develop. In this way, the participants will be encouraged from the start to do their own literacies, and they will carry on with that when the more formal learning program has ended. Confidence will be built up slowly, and a bridge between learning and using will have been created through this process.

FIG. 9.1 OVERLAPPING USE OF DIFFERENT LEARNING MATERIALS


Use of textbook exercises
Use of the participants' own literacy tasks and their own 'real' materials for learning
Duration of literacy learning programme

There are of course several problems in using multiple texts in such a learning group, which will need to be faced. For example,

- the facilitator will need to know as early as possible what literacies the participants want to learn and why
- materials relating directly to their interest may not be immediately available: such materials may need to be "brought in"
- support for the facilitator in encouraging the participants to collect material to match their interests will need to be given

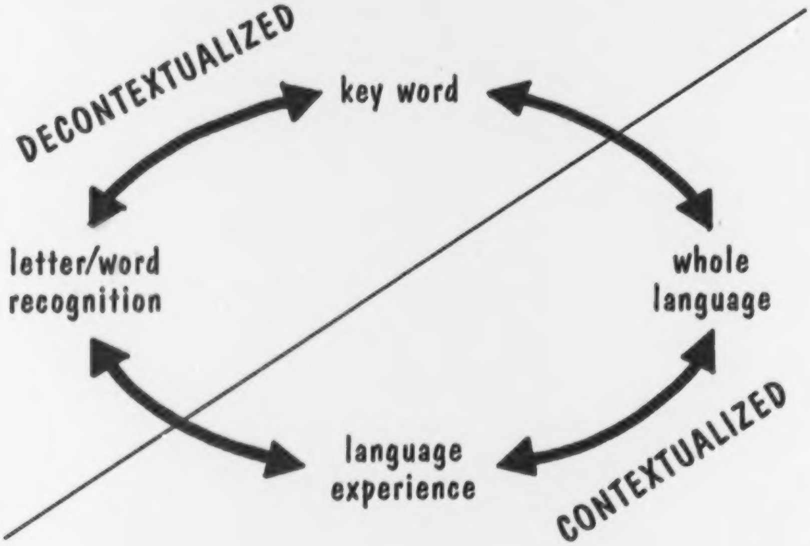
There are other issues which the use of multiple texts in adult literacy classes raise.

2. USING MULTIPLE METHODS

Not only can an adult literacy learning project benefit by using multiple texts and multiple literacy tasks; but also every text can be used in many different ways. It is not enough to use a text in one way only; the participants need to grapple with it in depth.

We set out here some suggestions for using a text in a number of different ways. This is presented in the form of a cycle. It can be applied to a literacy primer which concentrates on individual letters, syllables or words; it can also be applied to generative words (however produced), and to longer pieces of text, whether these are written locally or found texts.

For example, a literacy primer can be used in a **keyword** approach, encouraging the participants to discuss the various concepts and their own experience of the subject represented by the word (for example, 'fire' as burning houses or a forest fire rather than cooking). All such discussions will be rooted in the experience of the participants. This can lead on to the **whole language** approach: other already existing texts which use the subject being discussed can be found (for example, from the local newspaper) and brought into the group; they can be read with the participants and debated. In this way, the participants will see the keyword in a context and therefore as given meaning. This can then lead to the **language experience** approach, in which the participants (at first orally and later in writing) make up their own texts, using the same words in various ways. This can then lead back to the primer, or to a **letter/word recognition** approach, building up new words and using some of these again in the **language experience** or **whole language** approach.



This cycle of building up and breaking down, going from letter/word to recognizing and using the word in a real context, then to writing new contexts for the same word, and then to breaking down new words into letters again, can be entered at any point. The process can be varied, sometimes starting with individual words, letters and syllables from the primer, sometimes starting from a whole piece of text, sometimes starting from the oral contributions of the participants written down (and later their written contributions). This whole active process will help the participants with their learning of literacy skills. Multiple approaches can be used with any text. It will sometimes be hard work for the facilitators – but then helping anyone to learn is normally hard work. They will need all the support they can get, from the manager and supervisor and others.

The role of the manager: This is the significance of this discussion for the manager and supervisor – resourcing the facilitators and participants for the work they want to do; supporting the facilitators when the group engages in these various activities; helping the facilitators to work out new ways of using different texts; encouraging diversity in the learning groups, not uniformity; enabling the facilitators to build their own networks with other facilitators and other helpers; making sure that the trainers of the facilitators help these facilitators to be innovative, not rote teachers. As managers, we need to understand what is going on in the learning group if we are to resource and support and evaluate the program properly. Managers are the facilitators of the facilitators, just as the facilitators are the facilitators of the participants.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Group discussion

ACTIVITY 9.8:

We suggest that you should take one text and work out for yourself how many different ways this could be used in an adult literacy learning group. It can be a work-based text, an item of real literacy materials, or a primer. Make notes here of your discussion.

4. Critical Analysis

Such a sequence of activities will help the participants not just to learn literacy skills but also to develop critical analysis of the texts they use. It is important – if the participants are to become active users of literacy in their own contexts – that they should develop such an attitude through their literacy learning program. It is not enough to be able to read the newspaper; one also needs to be able to distinguish what one is reading and not accept everything as true simply because it is in print.

See 6:12

It has been suggested that – apart from **decoding**, that is, turning symbols like letters into sounds without understanding what the sound means – there are three main ways in which one 'reads' texts. We can take as an example a sentence from a primer: 'The farmer was feeding his chickens' (accompanied by a picture of free-running chickens and a man scattering seed). The first is a **literal** reading, simply taking every word at its face value, spelling out each word until it makes a sentence without questioning it at all. The second may be called an **analytical** reading: that is, one asks questions about the text. It sounds in the above sentence with its past tense as if something else is about to happen. What is the context? who was he? etc The third is the **critical** reading. Why should the writer have referred to the farmer as a man when in most regions it is

French language literacy learning, a suitable text for critical learning. UNESCO/Eric Schwab women who feed the chickens? Why are the chickens portrayed as free-running? Who wrote this sentence and why? what was the purpose behind the text, the unwritten assumptions? Critical literacy seeks to assess the issues of context, 'voice' (i.e. who is speaking?), authority and the production of knowledge in any text.

See 4:5

Critical analysis can be applied to both a literacy text and to a literacy task.

a) **Critical analysis of a literacy text:** while it is impossible to raise all the questions which can be asked about any text (this will vary according to the text and the context), some of the questions which a group of participants can ask are:

- who produced it?
- why was it produced?
- who is it intended for? and what assumptions are made about the users?
- what kind of language is it in? – both the tongue (i.e. the language: is it the normal language of the people it is intended for?) and the register (i.e. is it in polite language like a formal document, or is it written in a more vernacular usage of language, like an advertisement?)
- could it be made clearer for this particular group of users?

As one practitioner writes:

> **"Printed handouts, advertisements, signs, bus schedules, employer or union flyers and other realia that are part of the students' everyday environment can become texts [for learning]. Students can be invited to bring things to class that they need help reading (like traffic tickets). Again, it is important to address these materials in a critical context, going beyond literacy comprehension, with questions like 'Why is this written in language that is so difficult to understand..?" (Auerbach 1992 p66)**

The same principle of critical analysis of a text can also be applied to the literacy primer – for it is a text. Who wrote it? what images does it present? whose values predominate? what kind of pictures does it draw? There are examples of this kind of work. In Nepal, some groups have discussed the literacy primers to see how they show gender-stereotyping. In India, primers again have been reviewed to see what kind of development they seek to promote.

b) **Critical analysis of a literacy task:** All urban and rural communities have literacy tasks which they are called upon to engage in. The questions to be asked in any critical assessment of tasks relate to the kind of power relations which are revealed. Who is in charge? who decides?

See
2:14

We can take as an example the Marriage Registration Form which we cited earlier. Treating it as a text only (analytical reading), we can encourage the participants to debate how far it is clear and usable, and whether it serves the purpose it is intended for (to provide married women with security in their previously undocumented marriages). In terms of the literacy task (filling in the form and returning it to the government officer), the participants could debate how far the text facilitates the task it aims at and who controls the process (critical reading). The same can be said for newspaper articles: how far are they clear and usable to the participants; and who controls the flow of news?

Critical analysis of literacy is important. For the basic assumption of many texts is that the users must adapt themselves to the text, the readers should change to be able to cope with the text. But it is possible to encourage the participants to challenge that assumption, to suggest that the texts could also be made more appropriate to the users. Writing restaurant menus in French in countries like England and America may look good, but it is likely that this will drive a number of potential customers away (that, of course, may be the intention of the writers if they want only a select group of educated persons to eat in their restaurant and not the general public).

Critical analysis is not something which needs to be left until later in the learning program. Critical discussion of literacy can start on the first day. It is not something which comes *after* the learning of literacy skills; it is something which comes with using any texts, whether they are special or ordinary, whether they are found, brought-in or created. Adults will normally have strong views about many of the things which will be discussed in the learning group, including the kinds of texts they encounter during their lives. All texts can be used uncritically or they can be examined critically: and adult literacy learners can do this from the beginning of the learning program – provided the participants want to do this and the facilitators can be supported in this activity. It can be done; it is being done in some places; and if we are to help the participants to learn everyday literacy rather than textbook literacy, it will need to form part of that learning process.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual exercise and report back

ACTIVITY 9.8:

Take any text (primer or ordinary) and analyse it critically: try to see how many different questions you can ask about it. Add these questions to those listed above.

Evaluation

We have now reached the point in our training program where we can see our program in action. Before we go any further, it will be helpful if we evaluate what we have done so far.

We have looked at how to resource the program – how to find a location for it, how to equip it, whether to raise funds from the participants or local community for it. We have looked at how to find the facilitators and how to prepare them and how to support them in their work. We have looked at what kind of teaching-learning materials we could provide for each of the learning groups.

We now need to re-examine these questions. What decisions have we come to? Are these the most appropriate ones for our own situation? How will we know?

And we need to look again at how we arrived at these decisions. Did we take them alone? Were they imposed on us by senior managers? Did we involve any of the local community in making any of these decisions? And why?

Carry out an evaluation before you move on to the final part of the training program.

Conclusion

The task of teaching literacy skills (dominant and/or local) to adults calls for the use of many different kinds of learning materials, not just one kind; and it calls for these materials to be used in many different ways. And the texts being used need to be examined critically by both the facilitator and the participants. This is a hard task for a learning group, and they need the support of the managers and their staff.

Key Theme

Key Questions—Chapter 9

When choosing our literacy learning materials, we need to ask ourselves:

How can we help the participants, the facilitators and the members of the local support group in our programs to identify the ordinary texts in their own social environment?

How can we encourage the facilitators to use a combination of different materials and different learning approaches in their literacy learning programs?

How can we build processes to help the facilitators in this kind of work

- through training?
- through support?
- through networking?

How can we help the facilitators and the participants to be more critical of the texts they read?

Part THREE

Running the Program

In this third part of the training, we shall examine

- how we will run the program and monitor its activities,
- how far the adult literacy learning program can be widened into other activities,
- and what plans we can make for the participants and other stakeholders to continue after the end of the program.

In a five-day training workshop, we envisage that this will occupy approximately one day of training sessions (see Appendix A).

Chapter 10

Managing the Program

This section will deal with:

- *the structures of managing an adult literacy learning program*
- *the role of monitoring: especially*
    - *i) the role of the supervisor*
    - *ii) the role of reports (oral and written)*
- *building the capacity for problem-solving*

It will outline some general issues relating to participatory management, and conclude that management is something which needs strengthening.

TRAINER:

METHOD: It may be possible to bring in some managers of adult literacy learning programs to assist with this session

READER:

You may be able to interview one or two managers of adult literacy learning programs

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Once we have set up and resourced the program, our role has not finished. Now the program has to be managed.

This is not a full introduction to management approaches. That would require a training manual on its own. We are not dealing in this manual with topics like management styles and roles, working with people and delegation, administration, financial management, running committees and other meetings, or with developing policies, and managing change etc – in other words, with all the many facets of management. Some aspects such as managing staff and managing communication are discussed briefly as part of managing adult literacy learning programs, but if you wish to explore management in itself, you can use a management training manual such as *Just About Managing* (NCVO, London 1992).

1. Who are the Managers?

TRAINER:

METHOD: Brainstorm or poster session

ACTIVITY 10.1:

Put down here a list of the persons who are managing your adult literacy learning program.

Did you include

- *the facilitator*
- *the supervisor*
- *the community support group?*

Can you think of any others who might be involved in managing the program?

In any adult literacy learning program, the responsibilities for managing the program are not ours alone, they are shared. The key point here is that **everyone has management responsibility**. We have noted above the importance of this fact for the role of the manager. Look at that section before you go any further.

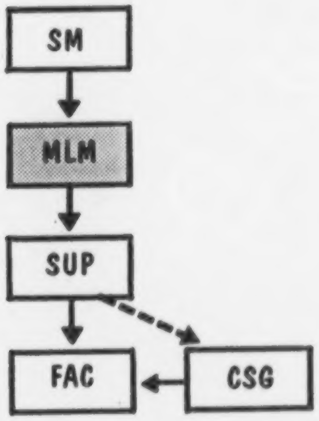
See
1:8
3:12-15
7:5-7

Management structures: There are many different structures and many different titles in the world of adult literacy learning programs. But whatever they are called, usually there are

Senior Manager (SM):	normally at headquarters office; not often closely involved.
⇩	
Middle Level Manager (MLM):	normally at District level; responsible for most aspects of program management.
⇩	
Supervisor (SUP):	goes out from District level office to visit classes or centers (other titles are used such as Co-ordinator and Project Officer; and there may be other intervening positions).
⇩	
Community Support Group (CSG):	(often given different title such as Village Education Committee etc): may visit learning group from time to time
⇩	
Facilitator (FAC):	manages the teaching-learning situation

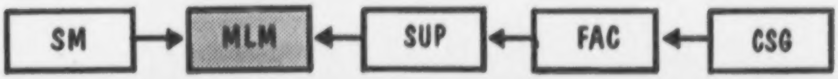
There are of course other ways to create a diagram of your own management structures. For example, some MLMs see the community support group as outside the management structure, like this:

FIG 10.1a: PROCESS STRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS



Other MLMs see themselves on a more horizontal axis:

FIG 10.1b: PROCESS STRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS



JOURNAL ENTRY

ACTIVITY 10.2:

Make a diagram of the management structure of your literacy learning program; give your own titles to these positions.

As we look at such diagrams, we see that the responsibilities of these people all overlap. And this emphasizes the importance of any organization to develop

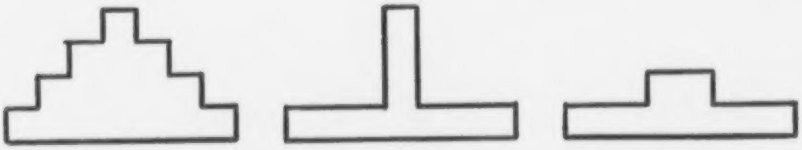
- teamwork
- mutual respect among the partners involved
- clear lines of authority and accountability at all levels
- good communications.

Can you think of any other factors?

Organizations and programs therefore have different patterns of working. Some have a wide base of workers and a narrow hierarchy of managers. Others have a narrower base of workers and more managers. Some have a more horizontal structure, where managers and workers are not so clearly separated (Figure 10.2). *You may care to consider the kind of organization you are working in, whether it is a horizontal or a vertical kind of organization, whether it has a medium-sized base and a tall but narrow power structure, or if it has a wide base and a shorter power structure.*

Part of our concern is to seek ways of including the participants into the management processes and structures.

FIG. 10.2: DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Which of these general models fits your own organization most closely? Where will you fit the participants?

2. Managing the Process:

Three of the main facets of managing the program on an on-going basis are

- to manage diversity in your program
- to watch it closely (monitoring)
- to intervene carefully when problems are brought to you or when you can see problems arising (intervention)

We shall discuss each of these subjects.

1. MANAGING DIVERSITY

We have noted above that a number of adult literacy learning programs are now encouraging the different learning groups to choose some of their own learning tasks and some of their own learning texts. And that means that each group will be following a different learning course.

See Chaps 3, 9

That is particularly true of work-based literacy programs; it is also true of literacy learning programs which work with existing community development groups, inserting literacy skill learning into the other activities of those groups. It is also very common in literacy learning programs where the learning groups engage in income generation or social development activities as well – each group chooses its own form of activity to do. So diversity in literacy learning programs is not new, but it is growing fast.

But it does not always make for easy management.

ACTIVITY 10.3:

Suggest some of the ways in which you would find it hard to manage a program where each adult literacy learning center is doing a different thing during the learning program. What are the main problems?

TRAINER:

METHOD: discuss with the visiting managers and list problems

It requires a good deal of trust to encourage the facilitators and the supervisors to develop locally based learning programs. But this is not impossible. Indeed, some of our learning groups may already be doing this in their other activities. As we have suggested, some may be engaging in income-generation activities of various kinds. Some may be working on social development projects such as forestry. It is not far from this to helping each group to develop, as part of each learning session, a specific locally based literacy learning program – something related to the work place or to the work of the group or to the community. An adult literacy learning group could take up some literacy project for the whole community, thus promoting community literacy while at the same time learning literacy skills.

Some of the senior managers, funders and government agencies may need persuading about the value of such an approach. These stakeholders may prefer uniform learning programs rather than individual group learning projects. But it is not necessary to be apologetic about this, to try to persuade reluctant superiors. Rather, the development of a program of varied activities can be presented to such officials as one of the most exciting parts of the program. This is one area where the middle level manager can be enthusiastic. To see local groups, in association with their community support group, embarking on their own program of learning, choosing what they want to learn, can be one of the most rewarding facets of the task.

Such a diverse program will call for very good communication processes. **Communication** is a major tool of management and needs to be watched carefully. The different kinds of communication, the decisions about who initiates the process, how far it is two-way, how far such communications (especially reports) go inside the organization, all need to be considered by the managers. In most literacy learning programs, communications between head office and the district and between the district office and the supervisors and learning groups has been an important issue, often of conflict. The language of communication (e.g. English from the center outwards to a certain point and then local languages from that point on; or standardised international languages for major reports and local languages for more informal memos etc) reveals the power structures in any organization's communication processes. Such issues become even more important in managing a diverse program.

2. MANAGING MONITORING

Such a diversified program will require strong monitoring. A system of monitoring will need to be built into the program from the start.

a) **What** are we monitoring?

ACTIVITY 10.4:

Put down here some of the things you want to monitor during your literacy learning program.

RAINER:

METHOD:
Poster session

You may have listed some of the following among the items in Activity 10.4:

- learning achievements
- behavioral changes
- changes in attitudes and perceptions of participants, facilitators and program officers
- activities properly fulfilled
- methodologies used

We can summarize the key elements of any monitoring process as being:

- the **activities** of the learning program
- the **achievements** of the learning program
- the **assessment** of the reasons for the achievements (i.e. any issues which may arise, such as the identification of barriers to learning, or good practice to be shared in other centers as well as problems). One of the chief roles of a manager is to identify and promote the sharing of good practice and innovations in adult literacy learning.

Look at the section on Evaluation, for monitoring is closely linked with evaluation.

b) **When** should monitoring be done?

See Chap 5

First, some monitoring should be done regularly, on an *on-going* basis. This is probably best done by the facilitator and the local community support group. Monitoring is not a matter for supervisor and manager alone; like everything else in this program, it is best done on a participatory basis. In addition, the participants can share in this on-going monitoring. One device used in some programs is to establish small groups of participants with rotating membership and leadership to report on the program. We can use both participatory monitoring and peer monitoring in our programs.

Secondly, there is *more regular* monitoring, say once a month. This will of course depend on the length of the program. Normally, this will be done by the supervisor in association with the facilitator, the community support group and the participants.

Thirdly, there will be *more occasional* monitoring – when special events take place, or infrequent assessments of progress. Many different persons will be involved in such monitoring.

c) **Who** should monitor?

We have already seen that different persons will be involved in monitoring: for example,

- participants
- facilitators
- community support group members
- supervisors
- outsiders (academics, trainers, consultants, and other experts)
- middle level managers.

The role of the facilitator (as monitor): the facilitators, in association with the participants, will keep records of work done. They will report from time to time on progress – which means they will be looking for signs of progress, for milestones passed. Much of this work can be done with the participants – indeed, the passing of a milestone cannot be recorded without discussing it with the participants. It is possible to go even further in this participatory approach. Encouraging the participants themselves to help with the keeping of the group's own records, instead of the facilitator doing it all, will enhance the motivation and the literacy learning of the group members, for they will come to feel that they 'own' the learning group. And the monitoring will be more thorough.

The role of the community support group (as monitor): The need to establish a community support group for every adult literacy learning group is discussed elsewhere. This group or some of its members will often work closely with the facilitator on a regular basis to monitor what is going on. They can provide a more detached view, looking at the relations between the facilitator and the participants. They too can help in the preparation of reports, and such reports can be discussed with them, for written reports are not always the best way of obtaining information about what is going on in any learning center.

See
5:6-12

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

See
3:14
7:5-7

We have set out on pages 10:11-12 some ideas about the role of the supervisor. This is a neglected area of adult literacy programs, and we can usefully spend some time working on the role of supervisors in our program, both what happens at the moment and what we feel should happen, preferably in discussion with some persons who have experience of working in that role. In some NGOs, supervisors often become middle level managers; in government programs, this happens more rarely.

ACTIVITY 10.5:

Work through pages 10:11-12 and the case studies and write notes on

a) the role of the supervisor in your own program, looking at who they are, their background, experience and role etc

b) the training and support you will provide for the supervisors in your program. Discuss this with supervisors if possible.

RAINER:

METHOD:
Group discussion

d) **How** to monitor?

The most usual way of monitoring is through the requirement of some kind of report – oral or written. The best kind of reporting is interactive: through observational visits, staff meetings or interviews; but written reports are also necessary.

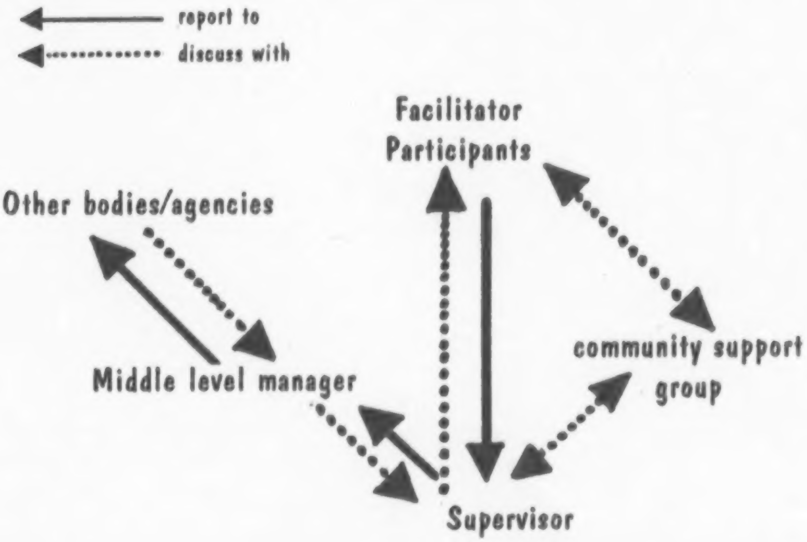
REPORTS AND THEIR USES

Reports are both oral and written. They are part of the system of communication which will form part of our program.

Systematic reporting: It would be good for us to set up a system of regular reports, either related to the calendar (monthly, quarterly or periodic, according to the length of the program) or related to the program itself (inception phase reports, mid-term reports and final reports). And we also need to plan who will report to whom and how often (see Fig. 10.3).

Staff meetings: Staff meetings are valuable; they provide in themselves milestones for the program. They are normally held regularly. While an open agenda is useful, it is also helpful to have some standard items which will be reviewed at most of the meetings. There is of course a danger here, that these standard items will form a checklist against which the program will be judged. Staff meetings should be seen as an on-going part of staff development (for supervisors and facilitators), not as examinations. And it is important that some action should be seen to arise from the discussions at the staff meetings – for without that, the staff members who attend may begin to feel that they are wasting their time in useless debates.

FIG. 10.3 A POSSIBLE REPORT FLOW DIAGRAM



There will of course be local variations. Some facilitators will report informally to supervisors rather than formally. Some facilitators have more formal relations with the community support group. There is also an argument for the development of some closer links between the middle level managers and the community support group. It will be our task to look at these and build up over time the processes which work best in our own situation.

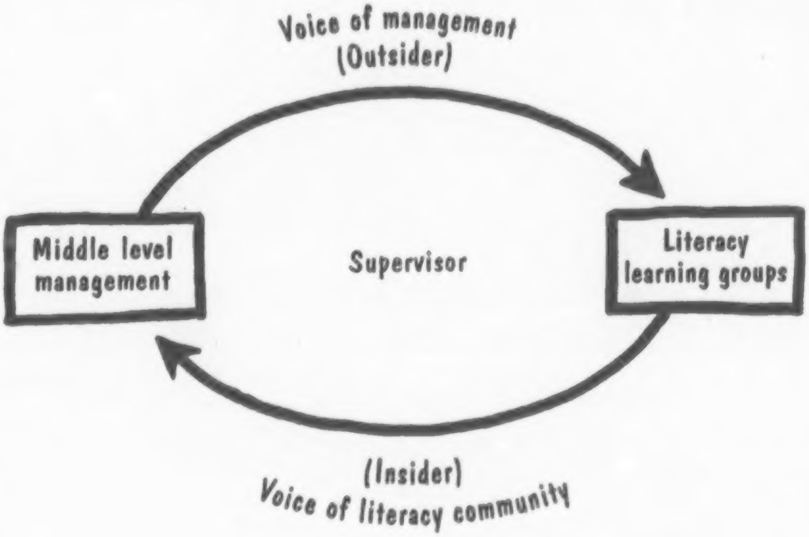
Staff meeting, India.
Alan Rogers

DISCUSSION SHEET (PART 1)
THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

1. Who are supervisors? NGO and government; gender; educational level; socio-economic distance (i.e. how far 'apart' are they from the participants culturally, economically and socially?) what are their career expectations?

2. Roles of supervisor: the importance of creating a clear job description; are they educators or social workers or do they have other roles?

They act as a bridge between the learning group and the manager's office, as a representative of both the managers and of the literacy learning group; decisions as to which 'voices' to be used: is identity a problem – who do they feel they 'belong' to? how can they be true to themselves at the same time?

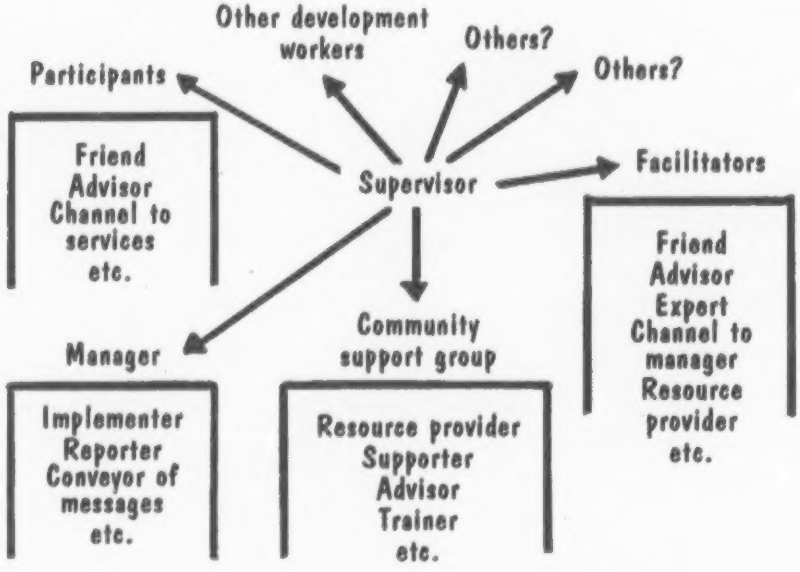


3. Support for supervisors : What is the relationship between the middle level manager and the supervisor? what training do they have to be supervisors? how are they supported in their work?

4. Creating relationships: How far can the supervisors share their work with facilitators and community? what is their role in building up the facilitators and the local support group?

DISCUSSION SHEET (PART 2)
THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The supervisor is above all a creator of relationships:



Supervisor visiting literacy class, Bangladesh. Alan Rogers

Visits: these too should be regular. Visits to learning groups, whether undertaken by the supervisors on a regular basis or by middle level managers and others more occasionally, should not be seen as a form of inspection but rather as a support visit, part of the on-going development of the facilitators. It is natural that many supervisors, being more familiar with formal schools than with non-formal education and often feeling insecure in non-formal approaches, may fall back on check lists; again they will work better as they gain more confidence through experience and training.

Written reports: It is often helpful if these can be flexible in format: this would allow the reporter freedom to report on what is important at the moment. But it will be equally helpful if all reports could cover the three main aspects of the program in some form or other:

- **the activities of the program:** this section of the report would outline what has been done, when and by whom.
- **the achievements of the program:** this section would outline what the results of the activities are. Just to say that '28 out of 30 literacy learners attended' is not enough – attendance is not the aim of the program. What were the *results* of their attendance – did they learn anything?
- **an assessment of the strong and weak points of the program:** this section would make an analysis of whether the program is being successful and what lies in the future. It could include examples of good practice which other groups can follow; and perhaps identify some of the barriers to literacy learning which have been encountered so that these can be debated in the staff meetings and ways round them can be found. If there are issues to be raised, these may be mentioned here.

One useful tool of reporting which some programs are adopting is that of photo-recording; this helps to make the written report come alive.

It is important that the reports (oral and written), like the staff meeting discussions, are acted upon. They are **formative evaluation**. Many managers receive reports and do nothing about them. This only makes the people who present these reports feel that the reports are useless – and they often stop preparing them or do not bother to write them properly. *No report should be left without some action, even when everything is going well.* A word of congratulation is not a waste of time.

All reports can be shared, discussed with as many of the stakeholders as possible – at staff meetings, at meetings of the community support group, and with the participants at meetings of the learning group. The supervisor could discuss the reports or parts of them when she/he visits the group.

As we have suggested, report writing is a literacy activity, and the literacy learners can share in this. They can help the facilitator to write her/his report and can learn a real literacy in this way. And in discussing the report, the facilitator and supervisor will learn a lot from the participants as well as from each other.

Training in report writing may need to be provided for those involved. Requests to staff to provide reports without providing some help and guidance may not yield the desired results. Report writing is not always an easy thing to do, especially the more analytical parts of the report. Describing what activities took place is not so difficult, but assessing the achievements and analyzing the program is harder. One way we can do this is to use the SWOT/SWOL method of analysis which we referred to earlier, but there are other approaches. There is however a danger that such training will become prescriptive, telling the report writers what they should say. Developing *creative report writing* is even more difficult but more rewarding.

See
8:18

Key points about reports: Our reports, whether they are oral or written, should be

- **flexible** – not always in a set format but allowing for special issues to be raised
- **quality** – not only on activities but also achievements and analysis
- **useful** – they should be used for program development
- **fluent** – as far as possible in a language in which the report writer is comfortable.

ACTIVITY 10.6:

Make a list of the reports you feel you will need, who will prepare them, and what each of them will contain.

REPORT	WHO WILL WRITE IT?	CONTENTS

3. MANAGING PROBLEM RESOLUTION

A large part of the process of managing the program is to help to find solutions to problems as they arise.

ACTIVITY 10.7:

From your own experience or from the case studies, make a list here of some of the major problems which you feel can arise during an adult literacy training program.

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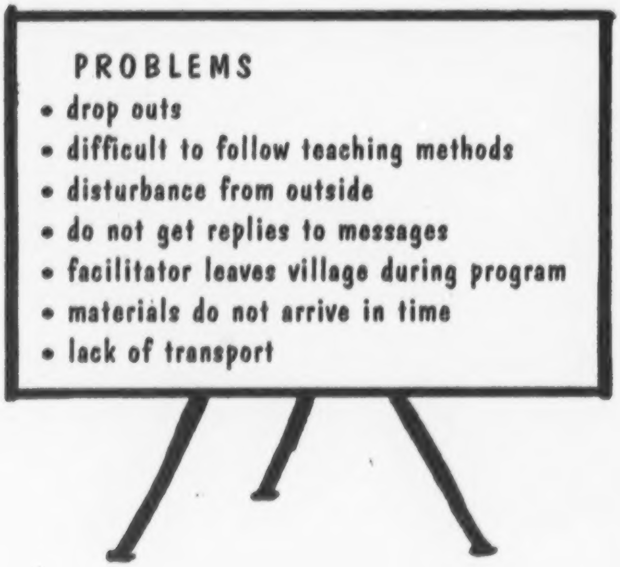
Look at the above list: some of them relate to the teaching-learning situation (T), some to the community (C), and some to the management (M). Mark each of these with T, C or M respectively. Are there any other kind of problem you have been able to identify? If you do not have any problem in one of these categories, try to think of some problem which might arise in that context (Some problems may fall into more than one category).

RAINER:

Method: Blackboard census

For example:



PROBLEMS

- drop outs
- difficult to follow teaching methods
- disturbance from outside
- do not get replies to messages
- facilitator leaves village during program
- materials do not arrive in time
- lack of transport

The above list is an example of different kinds of problems which have arisen during adult literacy class programs. But there are many others. *Add your own to this list.*

It is of course important to see these problems through the eyes of other people. The views of the facilitators and those of the participants will not always coincide – for example, over drop-outs and attendance. It is therefore useful if you can get the participants and members of the community support group as well as the facilitator to help you to identify problems.

The first stage to dealing with such problems is to look at the problem closely. Problems are not always what they appear to be at first sight. For example, the 'problem' of drop-outs may not in fact be a problem of drop-outs at all, but rather one of poverty (some participants having more important things to do); or perhaps of 'push-outs' (some participants being made to feel unwelcome). Defining the problem carefully and fully will help us more than half way towards developing an answer.

There are a number of ways in which such an analysis can be done. One is what has been called the 'force field analysis' approach. This suggests that there is in any situation 'driving forces' (things which help the program forward, sometimes also called 'motivating factors') and at the same time 'restraining factors' (things which create barriers to the program, sometimes also called 'demotivating factors'). Making lists of these factors, it may be possible to use the driving factors to overcome the restraining factors.

ACTIVITY 10.8:

Take one of the problems you have listed. If you have had experience of it, outline what happened. If you have not had experience of it, try to think what might happen. Use the questions below as a guide:

- what kind of problem is it?
  analyse it carefully (in association with your partners, if possible)
- who helped/could help?
  And what was/will be their role?
- did/can any others help?
- what solutions were/can be identified?
  who found them?
- which solution was/should be chosen?
  who by? and why?

It will be valuable to you to get as many other stakeholders as possible to help you answer these questions, to look at 'problems' through other people's eyes. For example, whose problem is it? It may be a problem to some people but not to other people.

TRAINER:

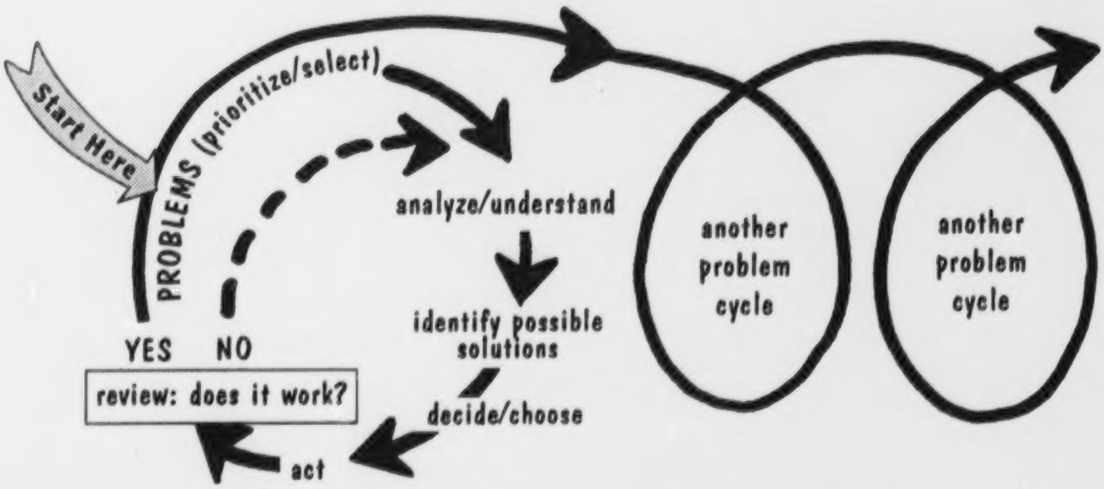
METHOD: Small group work and report back; or role play

Searching for solutions: We need to note that there is almost always more than one possible solution to any problem. The task of the managers and their partners is

- **to analyse** the problem carefully
- **to identify** possible solutions and to explore the implications of all of them. This may be done with the help of as many other persons and groups as possible.
- **to decide**
- **to act**

You will benefit if you can review the process after the event to see what you have learned from it.

FIG. 10.4 POSSIBLE WAYS TO MANAGE A PROBLEM:



All of these stages may become easier if they can be done with all the stakeholders involved. Part of our task as a manager is to help other people to solve their own problems, not to solve them for them. This is especially true of the literacy group participants; part of every adult literacy learning program is a capacity building program as well.

To reach a solution to any issue, be it small or a crisis,we and our partners will probably have to

- collaborate
- generate new knowledge
- be creative
- use multiple strategies
- use/get support from other experts
- share experience

Add any other requirements you can think of in your own situation.

3. Some Issues Which May Affect Management and Monitoring

The task of managing an adult literacy learning program, like any other part of our work, is not an easy one. It consists of balancing out many factors.

Tensions: Some of the tensions involved are set out below:

- between the aims of program and the goals of the participants
- between the specific context of the learning program and the general demands of the program
- between the community expectations and what can realistically be achieved in a limited amount of time
- between the funding available and the requirements of the learning program
- between program policies and the desires of the participants
- between collaboration with partners and speedy and decisive action
- between the values and expectations of your agency and the values and expectations of the local learning group
- between donor/funding agency mandates and constraints and the flexible approach needed for learning literacy skills

You can add some more from your own experience.

Improving management: There may be a need to develop and to strengthen the capacity of all the stakeholders involved in our program, especially the local groups, so that they understand and can help us to manage the program effectively. That is what this training manual is all about. Its purpose is not just for training managers but also for strengthening the capacity of the

- supervisors
- facilitators
- participants
- members of the community support group
- and any others you have identified in your own program

to help you to manage the program. We hope that you will use it, not only for your own development, but also to obtain their full support.

Key Questions—Chapter 10

When planning the management of our programs, we need to ask ourselves:

Who are involved in the management of this program? how can we share together?

What should be monitored? when? who should do it?

What is the role of the supervisor? how can he/she be supported?

What reports (oral and written) do we need? how shall we get them?

How can we help our partners to solve their own problems?

Chapter 11

Widening the Program

This training session will look at whether adult literacy learning programs should consist of literacy learning alone or whether they should be widened out to include other kinds of group or individual activities. It will explore

- *the reasons for widening the program*
- *the development of interest groups*
- *making links with other groups or programs*

and examine some of the problems of this approach.

TRAINER:

It may be possible for the visiting managers to remain for this session

It can be argued that adult literacy learning programs benefit more if they are widened out to include other kinds of activities. If the literacy learning group is located in a work-based context or an existing development group, this may not be necessary, for the members of these groups will already be engaged in other activities before they joined the group. But if the program consists of only literacy learning activities using special teaching-learning materials, it will help to include other activities so that the participants can be given a chance to use their literacy skills as they acquire them. A literacy learning program which is not connected to the real everyday lives of the participants, using a primer alone, is unlikely to encourage the literacy learners to use their new-found skills outside of the classroom. They need to learn how to use those skills while they are still engaged in the literacy learning program.

TRAINER:

METHODS: Individual activity, collected into plenary group

ACTIVITY 11.1:

Before starting this section, think for a moment about what adult literacy learning groups you know and if any of them engage in other kinds of activities than literacy learning. If so, what kind of activities? You could use the table below. We shall refer to this table during the training session.

LITERACY LEARNING GROUP	OTHER ACTIVITY
eg. Brampura Woman's Group	Credit and Savings

1. Purposes of Widening the Program

We have already seen that "literacy" does not just mean reading (in the abstract) and writing (in the abstract), but using literacy skills to read and write real texts so as to achieve real tasks in the daily lives of the participants. It is therefore important that we help the participants during the learning program

See Chap 2

a) to relate their literacy learning to the wider context from which they come;
b) to see how literacy is used in their daily lives;
and
c) to transfer their learning out of the learning center into their everyday activities.

We have also seen that this is easier for the literacy learners working in existing development groups and work-based programs than it is for the participants in the 'pure' literacy class, because the kind of literacy the latter are learning in the classroom (the primer) is less closely related to everyday life than the kind of literacy which the development group and the work-based group are normally engaged in.

See Chap 3

As we have seen, by using their literacy skills in their own lives, the participants can both

a) benefit from literacy in many ways, including socially and economically;
and
b) strengthen and develop their skills – that is, they will both widen them (to read and write a wider range of texts) and deepen them (to read and write these texts with greater fluency and greater understanding).

See 2:10-11

Without using literacy skills for real practical tasks, the learning will almost certainly remain shallow and hard to use.

Adult participants *can* engage in wider tasks: This is an important point. Modern approaches to non-formal education for adults are based on the belief that all human beings, irrespective of whether they are described as being 'literate' or 'illiterate', have the capabilities of

- acquiring knowledge
- analyzing situations critically
- expressing themselves and communicating with others
- being creative and innovative

and that they have the potential to develop these capabilities further. Adult literacy learning programs can be designed in a way that builds on these capabilities and that promotes these capacities further, leading to critical analysis of the participants' own context and to action as they feel necessary.

TRAINER:

METHODS: Small group work, brainstorming, or individual case studies (a poster session)

ACTIVITY 11.2:

Can you give any instances from your own experience where literacy activities have been used effectively by individuals and/or groups to bring about real changes in

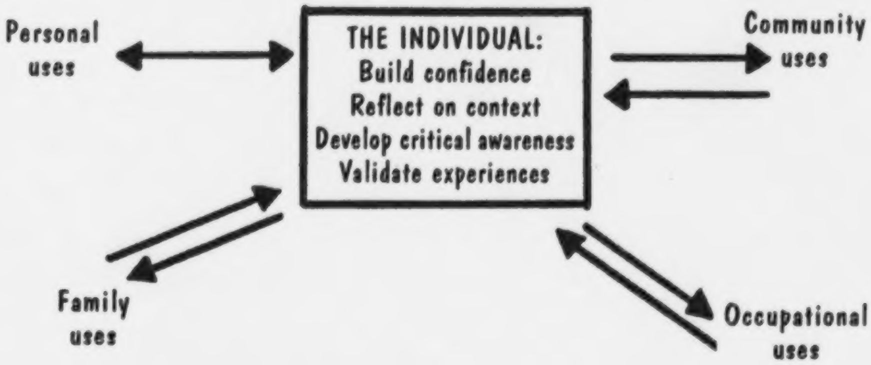
a) the personal lives of the participants?

b) the family lives of the participants?

c) the community lives of the participants (and perhaps on a wider scale)?

d) the occupational lives of the participants?

FIG. 11.1: USING LITERACY IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT



The main aim then of widening our program is to provide the participants with opportunities to learn through the use of literacy skills in real literacy tasks. It will in addition tend to increase motivation, provide the participants with activities which they have chosen, and relate the learning group to the rest of the community in which it sits. But these are not the main aim: that is to help the participants to learn literacy through using literacy skills.

2. Methods of Widening the Program

Many adult literacy learning programs have found that the participants demand that some other activity should accompany the literacy learning. Some of these activities are of an income-generation nature; others relate to social development, health, gender action groups or the environment.

ACTIVITY 11.3:

Look at the case studies in this manual and see how many of these include other activities alongside the literacy learning program. What kinds of activities are they?

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual study and report back

There are many ways in which we can make sure that other activities are included in our program if we wish. We are going to concentrate here on two main strategies to do this:

- develop interest groups among the participants in the literacy learning group
- create links with other groups and services.

Can you think of any other ways which would be more appropriate to your own context?

1. DEVELOPING INTEREST GROUPS

One of the ways to widen the literacy learning program is to promote the formation of different interest groups within the literacy center. For example, the participants can form sub-groups for

- ***income-generating activities*** (credit and savings, poultry, vegetable gardening for the market as well as for home consumption, sewing groups etc.)
- ***social and community activities*** (for example, forestry, legal rights, protest groups against gambling, alcohol, domestic violence, early marriage or for girls' schooling etc.)
- ***writing activities*** (for example, free writing, poetry, songs, local newsletters, blackboard newspapers, writing columns for the local press; re-writing 'ordinary' texts which are unsuitable for those with limited literacy skills and confidence etc.)
- ***working with other extension workers*** (health, agriculture, family planning, community development etc.)
- ***discussion groups on local issues*** (AIDS, local crises such as fire or floods or storms or drought etc.)

Can you think of any other kinds of interest groups?

The literacy learning group can also promote individual/personal activities among the participants rather than or as well as group activities.

Such interest groups may overlap with each other, and one participant may be a member of more than one group if it is agreed that this should happen. The participants will make their own decisions on matters such as this.

There is sometimes an element of common funding in these interest groups – members contribute from their own resources towards the costs of their activities. The participants will normally make the decisions about what they wish to do by themselves. We need constantly to remind ourselves that adult literacy learners *can* make decisions; they do it all the time in their own lives.

There are different possible approaches to such interest groups:

a) they can be formed entirely within the group of literacy learning participants (Figure 11.2a)

b) or they can be formed by bringing in some other persons who are not part of the adult literacy learning group (Figure 11.2b).

c) or of course mixed groups.

FIG. 11.2: RELATIONSHIP OF LITERACY LEARNING GROUP (LLG) AND INTEREST GROUPS (IG)

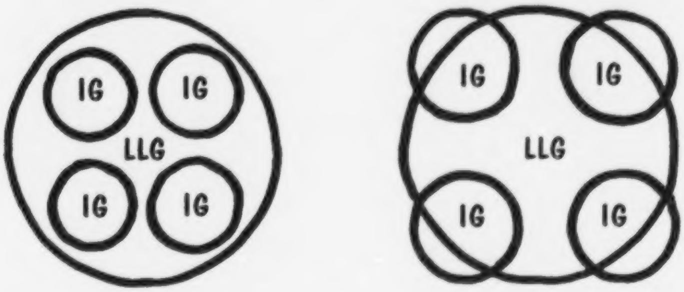


Figure 11.2a

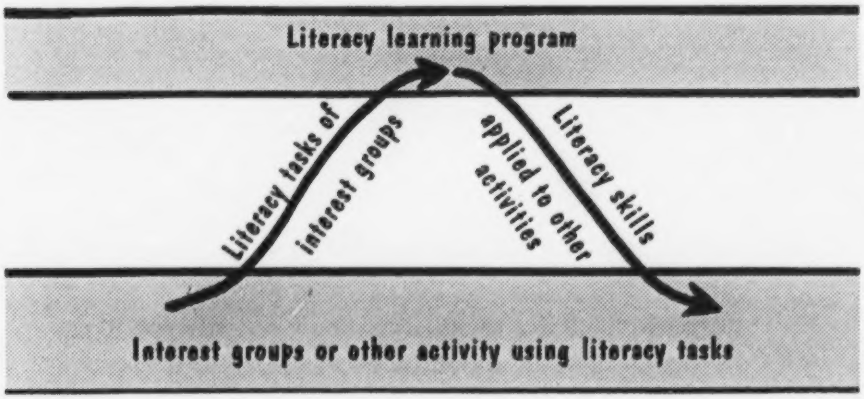
Interest groups within literacy learning group

Figure 11.2b

Interest groups overlapping literacy learning group

Relationship of other interest activities and literacy skill learning: All of these activities are undertaken alongside the learning of literacy skills. These activities need not take the attention away from learning literacy skills, nor do they 'waste time'. They contribute to the participants' motivation and enhance the learning of literacy skills provided that the literacy learning program is directly related to these activities and provided that these activities use literacy practices in the course of their work (Figure 11.3).

FIG. 11.3: RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING LITERACY SKILLS AND ENGAGING IN OTHER ACTIVITIES


Literacy learning program
Literacy tasks of interest groups
Literacy skills applied to other activities
Interest groups or other activity using literacy tasks

This is an important point. For in some contexts, the literacy learning group validates these interest groups and their activities to other members of the community and especially to donors/funders. In other words, the primary purpose of the groups may be seen by these people as being *literacy* learning; and if the literacy learning program should cease but the other interest activities continue without literacy learning, this can be seen as a 'failure' of the literacy learning program.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

There is however no reason why this should happen, provided the other activities are related to the literacy learning, provided literacy skills are being used in these other activities. It is therefore necessary that literacy activities should be built into the work of these interest groups. Many, if not most, income-generation activities which groups of literacy learners engage in, like pottery, weaving, goat or poultry rearing, mushroom growing, and even more elaborate activities like diamond polishing and silver-smithing, etc, often do not require the participants to use any literacy skills at all. But they could do (for example, keeping accounts and records, reading about the subject, making notices etc). In a few instances, literacy activities actually form the basis of income generation, like the women's group in Delhi who write and sew banners to hang in the streets, both learning literacy skills and earning money at the same time.

And in many cases, like the learning programs built on development groups and the work-based literacy learning groups, these interest groups may continue to function even after the literacy learning program has ended. It is therefore even more important that real literacy tasks should be built into the work which these interest groups undertake, so that literacy activities will continue after the end of the learning program.

TRAINER:

METHODS:
Individual activity, reporting to full group

ACTIVITY 11.4:

Look at the lists you have compiled in Activities 11.1 and 11.3; how many of these activities use literacy tasks in their work?

Separate interest groups working on their own projects, Bangladesh.
Alan Rogers

A legal rights learning group, India. MARG, New Delhi

2. LINKS WITH OTHER GROUPS AND SERVICES.

Our literacy learning group is a part of a whole community. The participants have not been withdrawn from their locality by attending the group. The work they do in the group could be integrated in the community, not kept separate.

This is of course clear in the case of literacy learning groups built on already existing groups or in the work place. But the adult literacy class will sometimes need some specific actions and some space in the timetable for such links to be created.

There are many ways we can help the learning group to build itself into the community. We shall concentrate on two of these

a) links with other community groups

b) links with other development services.

Can you think of other ways to build the literacy learning group into its local community?

a) Links with other community groups: In villages and urban areas where literacy learning programs are offered, other community development groups usually exist. Where there are such groups, linkages can be made with them to gain from their experience and to obtain their support for the literacy group activities. Such a process might include the following:

- explore existing groups and their activities, including their literacy activities (some of which will be local rather than the dominant literacy).

- see if they have produced or brought into the area any reading materials.
- visit them to learn what they are doing and how
- invite the leaders or other representatives of these other groups to attend some of the literacy group meetings or the community support group meetings
- see if the different groups can plan to work together to help each other.

Can you think of any other ways of working with other community groups?

We need to remember, however, that in many communities, different community and development groups may feel that other groups are rivals for resources rather than collaborators in development.

b) **Links with other development services:** Many villages and urban areas with literacy learning programs also have extension services and workers as well, all of them using (dominant) literacy practices. However, these resources are not always utilized effectively by the local community and by other development programs. Links of the literacy learning groups with these extension workers have proved effective in some areas in tapping into locally available resources and building the capacities of local groups as well. The case studies provide some examples of this, and you may know of some from your own context.

To develop such linkages with extension services and their workers, the literacy learning groups can take some or all of the following initiatives:

- invite extension workers to their meetings and/or to the meetings of the community support group
- explore how the extension worker(s) can work with the literacy learning group
- obtain some of the learning materials of these extension services and discuss them in the literacy learning group
- document all these processes.

Can you think of any others?

Making some of the first approaches to such services may be one of the roles of the managers of the literacy learning program. But it is again important that the participants in the literacy learning groups, in association with the facilitator and (if they wish) with the supervisor, should make the decision about which services to approach and when and how.

ACTIVITY 11.5:

List some of the other community groups and extension services in your locality, and the literacy activities they engage in. You may be able to make a visit to a local community during the training and to meet with some of the members of these groups/services, to talk with them about how they could help with the literacy work of the adult group. Use the table for this.

COMMUNITY GROUP OR EXTENSION SERVICE	LITERACY ACTIVITIES
e.g. parent-teacher association	brochure to parents about helping at school or school uniforms etc
e.g. nutrition extension service	leaflets on healthy food; buying food in the market etc

TRAINER:

METHOD: Two groups discuss how to develop links with

a) other community groups

b) extension services

3. Conclusion

Adult literacy learning programs which stand alone run a very real danger of teaching a decontextualized literacy learning program, and the school-based literacy being taught will often not be transferable into daily use. Developing the uses of literacy skills *while the literacy learning program is going on*

Key Theme

- will help to motivate the participants
- will reveal the relevance of the material being learned
- will help the transfer from the learning center to the outside world
- will help the participants to learn literacy skills by using them for their own purposes.

See 9:10-14

No literacy learning program need stand alone; it is part of a whole community; and the literacy learning group can continually be making links with other groups in that community.

WIDENING THE STAFFING:

See Chap 8

But widening the program will usually have important implications for the staffing of our program. Some of the facilitators may not be able to run such interest groups; and they may feel hesitant about approaching other groups in the community or other services more generally. A great deal of facilitator training and support will need to be provided if this element is to be successful. Other group leaders may need to be recruited.

But one thing the literacy facilitator can do is to help the participants with the literacy tasks which will form part of these wider activities. This is after all their main work, helping the participants with their literacy activities. Every encouragement needs to be given to the facilitators to broaden out from the prescribed learning program into new forms of literacy activities which the participants themselves want to do.

Key Questions—Chapter 11

When planning the learning group activities, we need to ask ourselves:

Do we wish to add other activities to our adult literacy learning program? If so, why? and what kind?

Can we use interest groups in our program?

Can we assist the learning groups to make links with other activities and groups in their community?

Can we widen the program in any other way?

How can we help the facilitators and the participants to engage in using their literacy skills for real literacy tasks?

Women's interest group, Bangladesh.
Alan Rogers

Chapter 12

Continuing the Program

This final training session looks at the importance of encouraging the participants to continue to use their literacy skills after the end of the learning program, and to learn from that use. It explores some of the ways in which support can be provided for them and others in further learning programs:

- *how to help them to develop action plans for themselves*
- *how to encourage some of them to link into continuing educational provision*
- *how to provide on-going support for literacy practices in the community*
- *how to help the stakeholders to continue their own development*

Finally this chapter explores how each of us (both the readers and the writers of this manual) can continue our own self-development.

This chapter is not the end of training; it leads on to further steps in a continuing path of self-development.

TRAINER:

If it is possible for the visiting managers to stay for this session, their experience will be most valuable.

1. The Importance of Continuation

The question is often asked by many literacy participants, "What will come after the end of the learning program?" In part, this is a sign of dependency: it often means "What will *you* give us next?" But in other cases, it is more genuine: "where do we go next?"

RAINER:

METHOD: Role play of dialogue between participants and manager

ACTIVITY 12.1:

What kind of follow-up (if any) do you think managers of an adult literacy learning program might provide for the participants in the programs?
Try to indicate what you plan to do in your own situation.

The main problem with this question is that it assumes that the agency manager will decide what comes next. But the decision could be made by the participants and this is more likely to gain their whole-hearted support.

What is more, the question assumes that all learning is done through educational activities. But this is not true; not all the learning is done in educational settings. Most of our learning is done through living, not in a classroom. A person never stops learning.

The fallacy of "banking education": We therefore need to be aware of the dangers of the attitude of what has been called 'banking education'. 'Banking education' is that view which says that people learn a great deal over a short time through their schooling (usually but not always in their early years), and then they go out and practise what they have learned for the rest of their lives without any further schooling. It is called 'banking' because one picture of how it works is that of a bank account: a sum of 'money' (i.e. knowledge and skills) is deposited (through school or adult literacy class) in a 'bank account' (i.e. in the person) and it is then drawn upon throughout the rest of life.

Freire (who developed this argument) suggests that there are many reasons why such an approach is wrong:

- no-one, when planning and running a school or literacy class, can know what kind of learning anyone will need later on in life
- there is not enough time in school or in an adult literacy learning program for the participants to learn everything that they will need for the future
- society is changing so fast that further learning is always being required. Life twenty years from now will be very different and unexpected, so we cannot learn about it now
- the learning done in school is normally not contextualized, meeting the different individual concerns of each of the learners. It must necessarily be generalized
- learning through experience in life is different from learning in a classroom. For example, farming in a school or college is different from the farming which is done in the fields. The only way one can learn practical knowledge and skills is outside the classroom. The same is true of literacy: literacy in real life is very different from the primer literacy used in the adult literacy learning program.

See
Chap
2
3:12

Learning then will continue after the end of the learning program; and most of this learning will be done in the course of living. So in response to the question, 'now what?', the concern of the manager of an adult literacy learning program is how to help the participants to see that they are already engaged in learning through the activities they engage in and that this will continue for the rest of their lives.

This will sometimes be difficult, for many people think that they need more classes to learn. They have not realized that they learn most outside of the classroom. Thus some of them will want to engage in more formal and planned learning opportunities like special workshops and courses, although in fact most of the time, they will be learning through their everyday experiences. Our aim then is to help the participants to see continuing learning as being life-related, as well as teacher and textbook related.

Post-literacy: The help which is provided with this continuing learning is sometimes called 'post-literacy'; but that term is not always useful. Post-literacy normally means a special learning program which is developed for adult literacy learners to follow after their initial literacy learning program – an intermediate learning program between initial literacy learning and continuing education or some other future activity using literacy skills. However, that is perhaps too narrow a view of post-literacy. A better way of formulating an approach to post-literacy is to recognize that there is a need to help all those who have some (but limited) literacy skills and limited literacy confidence to deal with their everyday literacy tasks. This can be seen not simply as a program of further planned learning but as a wider approach to assistance with literacy in the community, including help to those who will never come to adult literacy classes or groups (see DFID 1999).

Key Theme

It may then be necessary for us to help to develop for and with the participants and for and with others in the community some action plan of help with their literacy activities built upon their limited but growing literacy skills and confidence. And this can lead gradually into further programs designed to help the community members with their developmental activities, including literacy – either continuing education or other forms of training for development.

Before we discuss what forms such assistance can take, we need to consider some general points first:

See 1:4-5

a) re-visit whether we are creating a new program or not. If we are free to plan our own program, then we will need to include some form of follow-up in our plans. And it is more effective if this can be planned from the start rather than left to be planned after the initial literacy learning program has come to an end. If, on the other hand, we are implementing a literacy learning program which has been planned by someone else, then we can review what (if anything) has been already planned for the participants after the end of the program in the light of this training session.

b) the importance of participation is just as great here as in literacy learning programs. It will need to be the participants, collectively or individually, who decide what they want to do and what they need to learn in order to do it. We will have much listening to do in planning the follow-up program.

c) provision for lifelong learning support will vary according to the nature of the learning group. For example, a work-based group will continue to develop their literacy practices through the work-place. A community development group will continue to develop their literacy and other skills through their group activities. The main area of concern is with the adult literacy class which stands alone. Here a new program will need to be developed.

2. Helping the Participants to Draw Up an Action Plan

Towards the end of any initial literacy training program, it will be useful if the facilitator, with the help of the supervisor where necessary, can work with the participants to draw up an action plan of where they plan to go next.

The first part of any action plan might well be to look closely at the ways in which the participants are already using literacy in their lives and to help them to engage in these literacy tasks more effectively. That is the main aim of the learning program we have been advocating in this manual – to help the participants to read the texts they are already using and to write those texts which they feel they need to write more fluently. Many post-literacy programs seek to launch the participants straight onto new uses of literacy – reading new material, mainly for developmental purposes, through local community libraries, for example. It may be better to help the participants with their *existing* uses of literacy before they begin to develop new uses of literacy.

See
Chap
2
3:12-13

Secondly, if in the adult literacy learning groups, smaller interest groups have been set up, or if the whole group has decided to start their own project, or if each of the participants has started an individual activity, these are likely to continue and can grow into new forms of activity. It is important for the facilitator or supervisor to be able to discuss with the participants how they plan to continue to develop these activities, and what literacy usages will be involved. Encouraging the participants to form linkages with other on-going extension services will help here.

See
11:6-7

Thirdly, other kinds of activities may exist in the village or urban area. A survey of these can be made by the supervisor, facilitator and participants to see how they relate to the literacy interest groups. It may be possible for some or all of the literacy learning group members to join in these existing community activities. The participants can explore what these community activities are currently doing (including their existing uses of literacy) and how these literacy practices can be developed further (including possible new uses of literacy).
It is in most cases preferable to start by building on existing activities rather than start new groups.

See
11:9-10

Some of the participants in our learning programs may develop their own individual forms of on-going activity. For example, in Kenya, from a group of women participants, one person began to work in her church, writing notices and hymn sheets; another small group began to make smokeless stoves, keeping accounts; another individual joined a community health group; another began to help her husband who was a school teacher to keep the school records, and so on. All of these diverse literacy activities sprang from an adult literacy learning group.

If none of these is possible, then the literacy learning group can/should discuss what follow-on activities they want to do (not what they want to be provided to them). These can be individual, small group, whole group or community activities.

It is of course impossible here to list all of the many different kinds of activities which adult literacy learning participants can go on to do for themselves, individually or as a group. They will of course depend on the local situation. Some of the most common would seem to be

- children's support group (health and nutrition)
- community center (e.g. village library, learning center)
- co-operative
- credit and savings
- discussion group
- environmental enhancement (e.g. forestry; area cleansing etc)
- garden club (vegetables, flowers)
- income generation
- older persons' group (e.g. Help the Aged)
- parent-school support group
- personal literacies
- PRA
- self-help group
- shop (e.g. stationery)
- social and community action
- water group
- writing group

Any of the above – and many other kinds of group and community activities – can form the follow-on activities. It is up to the group, the facilitator and the supervisor to be creative and imaginative in this work; and it is up to the manager to encourage, not to hold back these innovations.

See Indonesia Case Study

Just as the literacy learning group will have its own literacy activities (reading primers and other texts, writing exercises, doing numeracy calculations etc), so each of the new activities will have its own literacy and numeracy practices. The Indonesia case study is a very clear example of this process.

ACTIVITY 12.2:

Try to describe some of the kinds of activities which your literacy learners can go on to, and the kinds of literacy practices which these new activities will call for – in other words, how they can use their new literacy skills to help them with new activities.

Existing literacy learning group	Existing literacy activities	New kinds of activity which group can engage in	New kinds of literacy activities which new group work will engage in
e.g. Brampura Women's Literacy Group	reading pages of literacy primer; writing pages of literacy primer;	credit and savings	a) keeping their own loan and savings accounts; opening bank account; depositing and withdrawing money; b) planning an income generating activity; ordering materials; learning skills; selling products; keeping business accounts etc

TRAINER:

METHOD: Small group work

3. Continuing Education

See
1:8
2:10

See
3:8-9

Many participants ask for "more classes" after the end of the literacy learning program. By this, they mean the extension of the existing classes. As we have seen, there are great values in such groups. But the central problem still remains: how do the participants transfer what they learn in these classes into use in their daily lives?

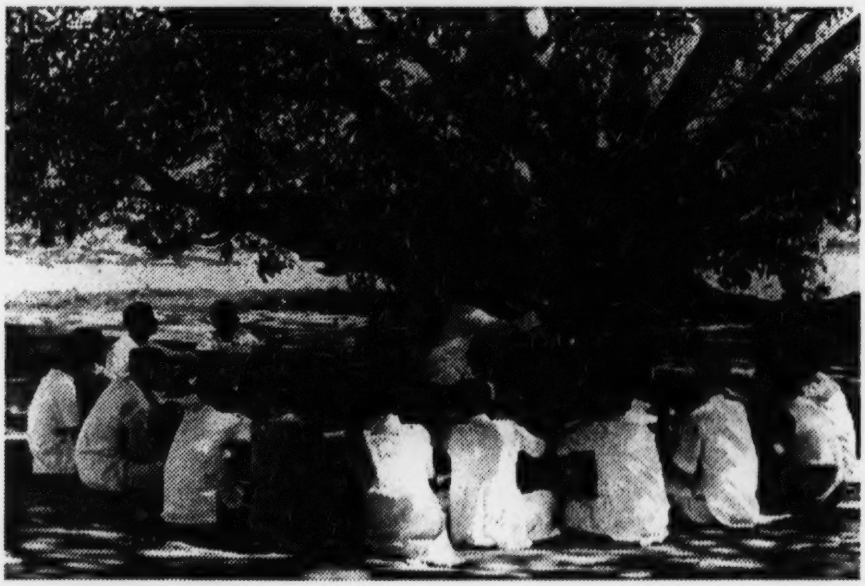
A number of agencies have begun to develop programs of formal or non-formal schooling for adults (mainly younger adults, especially girls and young women). They often call these programs "continuing education".

This is too large a subject to be dealt with fully here. There are in many countries existing government-sponsored programs of continuing education into which some of the participants from our literacy learning groups can enter. But this will not always be true, or where they exist, they may not be acceptable to the participants. We may have to build our own.

We can identify three main forms of continuing education programs:

- **access** courses into the formal education system of primary and secondary schools
- independent **non-formal** schooling with a separate curriculum (and in some cases equivalency to the formal system of schools)
- **vocational** skill training programs.

Can you think of any other kind of continuing education program you know of?



Continuing education class, India. UNESCO

ACTIVITY 12.3:

Look at the case studies: what forms of continuing provision have these programs made? Are any of them leading into more formal kinds of "continuing education"? Add examples from your own experience. You could mark each item in the list with the letters A for access, NF for non-formal, V for vocational, and O for other.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Responses on paper grouped into A, NF, V and O

Issues: There are certain issues relating to continuing education for adults which need to be mentioned here. The first is that the continuation of learning opportunities and the application of knowledge and skills can be seen together; they do not need to be separated on a 'learn first, practise later' principle.

Secondly, the distinction we made above of contextualized and decontexualized learning programs also applies here. Some continuing education programs are common throughout the country – they are decontextualized, general to all the participants and usually long-term. They use common textbooks even when these are specially written for adults. Others are more specific, meeting the different and immediate needs of the participants, normally short-term.

See
4:3-4

Some agencies have developed in a participatory way their own **curriculum** of material to be learned in the continuing education program. One example is Nirantar in India, which has a curriculum for rural women consisting of the following subjects: society, health, forests, land, water, language, and mathematics (Nirantar 1995). In Senegal, TOSTAN has also developed a quite different curriculum of six modules to meet the needs of the people they were working with: problem-solving (including mathematics), hygiene, health (medical), financial and material management, leadership and group dynamics, and project planning and development (income-generation) (Guttman 1995). Others exist such as ANTEP in the Philippines which has developed an interesting alternative three year curriculum for adults (both literate and non-literate) which turns the dominant approach to education on its head. It starts with exploring the individual self (psychological and spiritual elements), then turns to inter-personal communication (social relationships), and only in the third year turns to developing the skills which the learners need to work in the world, including literacy skills as well as production skills (ASPBAE 2000).

Most programs of continuing education for adults provide the participants with **certificates**. We have seen above something of the value and drawbacks of such certificates. They may open doors for some participants which would otherwise remain closed. But as we have seen, certificates can also distort the learning program by decontextualizing it. We will need to decide for ourself whether certificates are what the participants want in their own situation.

See 5:11

Conclusion: What is clear is that any adult literacy learning program should not just come to a stop. The work that the facilitators and participants have been doing needs to be rooted into some on-going context. Just as the literacy learning program came out of a specific context, a specific need, so it will lead on to further specific activities. It is not in itself the start of something new but rather one more step in the on-going process of community development which began a long time ago and which will lead on to further steps. These steps will need to be supported in some way.

TRAINER:

METHOD: Individual activity, then shared in groups

ACTIVITY 12.4:

Try to set your literacy learning program into the context of the ongoing development activities of the local community. Get the literacy participants to help you to do this. Some of the case studies may help you with this Activity.

Previous community development situation out of which the literacy learning program grew	Literacy learning program	Further development activities in community

4. Supporting Literacy Practices in the Community

The aim of any adult literacy learning program, we suggest, is for the participants to engage in literacy practices in their daily lives both during the literacy learning program and for the rest of their lives. How can we make sure there is some support for them as they use and develop their skills further in their families and in their own community?

First, we need to recognize that the participants who complete their literacy learning programs are not the only people who need help. Many others have finished a period at primary school without having gained enough confidence or enough skills to complete their own daily literacy tasks fully. Secondly, there are many people in our villages and cities who will never come to adult literacy learning programs, however much we may try to motivate them. How can we make sure that help will reach these people where they are, outside of the classroom?

What seems to be needed is some form of **literacy extension service**. Health and agricultural and community development extension services go out to where the people live and work: onto the farms, into the homes, into the community activities of the people. The extension workers provide help at the point and often at the time of need. They help with the farming practices, with the health and nutrition and family planning practices, with the community development practices of the people.

See
3:10

One way to help to develop such a service for the literacy practices of the people is to use the graduates from our literacy learning programs to help others. One-to-one 'literacy friends' may be a model to help these people; and our literacy graduates will continue to use, and to learn through using, their literacy skills through helping others.

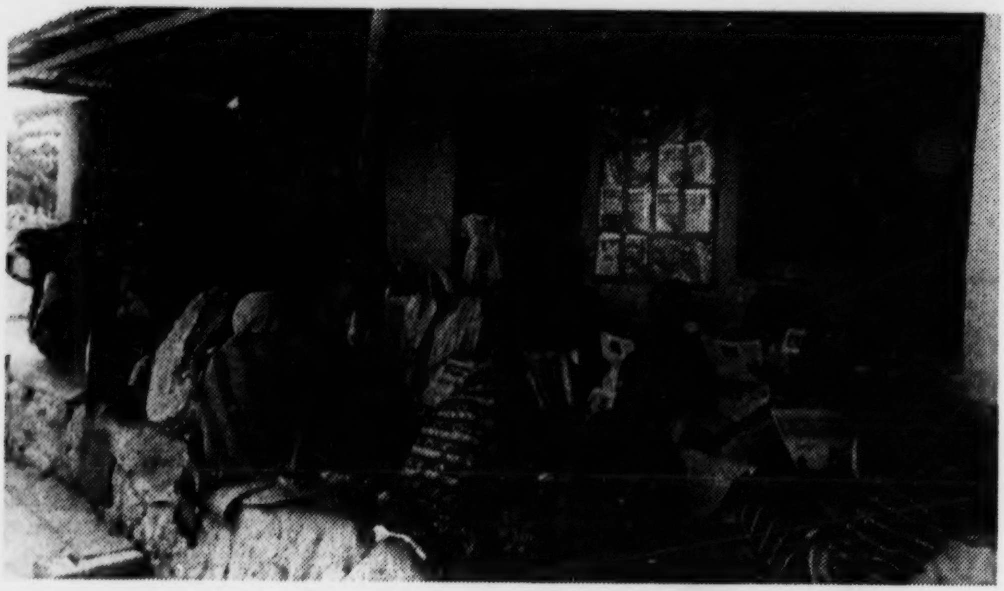
We may find that such 'friends' often become a group which share their experiences. They may also become a focus for influencing the producers of 'ordinary' materials to bridge the gap between the users of these materials and those who produce them – working with these producers to help them to make these ordinary texts more acceptable to persons with limited literacy skills and confidence. For example, extension programs produce many texts for use in the villages and towns. These agencies will often welcome help in the preparation of these texts in formats which are more appropriate to users, especially when they feel that there are local helpers who will distribute these texts and mediate them to the people.

There are other approaches which have been tried to help build up the literacy practices of local communities. For example, support can be given to other local groups in the development of new literacy activities within their programs.

Again, a number of facilitators have made links with extension workers in other development programs, to help the participants in these programs with their literacy activities. Some organizations have established 'drop-in centers', where individuals can obtain help and advice with their own literacy tasks, and can learn while doing this. These are often staffed by volunteer helpers. A literacy learning group can set up and staff such a center on a volunteer basis as part of the group's projects. In Nigeria, two literacy shops have been set up in a market to provide such help and advice to the market workers and shoppers, using students as volunteer helpers. There must be many more ways in which we can provide ongoing help with literacy to the people of the villages and urban areas in which we are working. *Try to work out some more ways for your own situation.*

Community libraries/learning centers: Many programs set up village or community libraries, reading rooms and in some cases centers with a wider role of continuing learning centers as a continuation after the end of adult literacy learning programs. These have however rarely been very effective, and they have been designed to meet the needs of only a small number of those who finish initial literacy learning groups (usually one in ten).

One of the main reasons for this is that these centers have been supply-led – that is, new reading materials have been supplied to them from outside the community, and the facilitator/librarian is charged with trying to motivate the people to use them. The only real basis for the success of such centers is if they are demand-led – that is, if they supply what the people really want, not what the government or agency think the people want. If these centers can help the people with the literacies they are already doing (as drop-in centers, for example); if they can supply the people with those materials which they need for their *existing*



Village library, Bangladesh.
Alan Rogers

literacies (pens and pencils, stationery, stamps and envelopes; forms which they need to fill in; up-to-date newspapers and magazines etc.) rather than trying to persuade them to engage in *new* literacies (reading about health or agriculture or vegetable gardens etc.) they are more likely to be used. Such community/literacy centers need to start where the people are, with their existing activities, and only gradually encourage the people to widen out from these into new activities.

Drop-in center, Bangladesh. Dhaka Ahsania Mission

ACTIVITY 12.5:

Suggest some ways of helping those persons who do not come to literacy learning groups with their literacy activities in the community.

RAINER:

METHOD: Small group or poster session

5. Developing the Facilitators, Community Support Group Members and Supervisors

So far, we have been talking about follow-up activities which will help the participants and others in the village or town to develop further in their literacy activities. But the manager of any literacy learning program will also need to ask how the **facilitators** which have been used during the program can also be helped to develop further. Some aid agencies feel that to choose and use some village or town people as facilitators and then to drop them at the end of the program is not acceptable today: that would seem to be using people for our purposes. On the other hand, some people (especially women) value the chance of even temporary employment because it may lead on to further employment; they do not see it as inevitably leading to any form of permanent activity.

See Chap 8

We do not wish to make detailed suggestions here. Everything will depend on the circumstances in which we find ourself and on our own ingenuity, and of course on their wishes. Some programs help the facilitators to find new work, or to set up their own income-generating groups; some offer them loans to establish small enterprises. Just as the learning work of the participants does not cease at the end of the literacy learning program, so too the learning and development needs of the facilitators do not cease when the classes come to an end. We need to ask ourself whether we have any responsibility for helping the facilitators to develop further as they wish.

The same may also be said of the **members of the learning support group** and of the **supervisors**. The support group will often disband at the end of the literacy learning program; but the members too may wish to feel that there is some future for them as a group or individually. They will have learned a good deal (for example, how to run and participate in a committee meeting; how to take notes and prepare reports; how to make decisions; how to mobilize resources; how to supervise etc.). It may be that we will feel the need to ask ourself how far we are able to help them to continue their learning, and whether we need to ensure that they too have somewhere to go to, some activities to engage in. And the supervisors too may need some further plan of action. It may be part of our role as manager to help members of both groups to plan their own futures, to create their own intentions, and to help them to develop the confidence to act on these plans. This may need some resources – but finding resources is the task of a manager.

See 3:14

See 10:11

ACTIVITY 12.6:

Give some thought to the two action plans which are needed:

	ACTIVITIES	LITERACY PRACTICES
Participants		
Facilitators/ supervisors/ support group members		

TRAINER:

METHOD:
Two groups

6. The Further Development of the Managers

This training manual is concerned with the development of ourselves as managers of adult literacy learning programs. We have tried to help you to learn how to plan, implement and manage a literacy learning program. The final question now relates to ourselves as much as to the participants, community support group members, facilitators and supervisors – where will we go from here? For the end of this manual is not the end of our own development. We will of course learn from day to day as we implement our literacy learning program, but that learning will be unplanned. But we will also need to make an action plan of purposeful activities for our own learning and development.

We are suggesting in an Appendix some further source material you can use: but you will need to find your own reading as well. For many of these texts will not be available ('found') in your area and may have to be 'brought in'; and they are by their very nature general in their approach. There will be other texts relating to adult literacy in your area which will be more appropriate to your own needs. *Make your own list.*

And we can also develop an action plan for our own writing as well as reading. Writing reflective notes on what is happening is one way. Keeping a learning journal ("What have I learned from this activity or that crisis?") is a useful approach.

So long as we remember that we have not finished anything, that we have taken one more step along our own lifelong learning path, and that there are more to come, then this will help us to plan our own learning.

FINAL ACTIVITY:

Even if you do not do any of the earlier Activities, we strongly urge you to do this one. Draft your own action plan: where will you go next?

What further

- reading about literacy and literacy learning programs
- writing about literacy and literacy learning programs

do you plan to do?

Who will you talk with?

What further courses/workshops do you plan to attend?

etc

We wish you every success with your difficult and challenging – but most worthwhile – tasks.

Key Questions—Chapter 12

When planning for the end of the literacy learning program, we need to ask ourselves:

How can we help the participants to plan their own follow-up activities?

What links can we help the participants to make into other services such as continuing education?

What forms of continuing support can we provide for literacy practices in the community?

How can we help the facilitators, supervisors, community support group and other stakeholders to continue their own development after the end of the program?

What plans do we have for our own continuing development after this training program is over?

Evaluation

Now that we have come to the end of this part of the training course, we need to evaluate our own progress.

We have looked at how to run the program, especially how to monitor it and how to address problems as they arise.

We have looked at how far we can encourage the participants to widen the program into other activities.

We have also looked at what we need to do after the end of the literacy learning program and what we feel our responsibilities are for those who have been involved.

Now examine for yourself –

- have you achieved all the milestones you set for yourself? are there parts of this training course you need to look at again for your own sake?
- do you feel you need to explore some areas in more detail?
- how confident do you feel that you can engage in this task?
- what do you feel you need to learn next in order to be good at this job?

We would welcome any suggestions you may have to make as to how this training manual could be improved. Please write to

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Office of Education
54 Wilton Road
Westport, CT 06880 USA

Center for International Education
285 Hills House South
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003 USA

Education for Development
Block 33
University of Reading
London Road
Reading RGI 5AQ, UK

Case Studies

The following case studies have been prepared for use with this training manual.

They have been chosen to provide widespread coverage in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They are not intended to be models to be followed, but examples of different kinds of adult literacy learning programs which are being provided today.

We have used the language forms in which the case studies were presented to us.

We have printed them with a wide margin so that you can make your own notes against them during your studies in the training program.

We are grateful to
Joan Dixon, Laurie Puchner, Elda Lyster, Marty Legwaila, Hamdi Qenawi, and Joanie Cohen Mitchell for providing these case studies.

We suggest that you write up some case studies for yourself from your own locality. To assist you in this, we have provided in Appendix B a list of the questions we asked the case studies writers to try to answer.

BOTSWANA

National Literacy Programme

BACKGROUND

The Botswana National Literacy Programme started in 1980. The objectives of the Programme are as follows:

- to eradicate illiteracy, and to enable an estimated 250,000 illiterate adults and youth (40% of 15-45 years of age) to become literate in Setswana and numeracy within a period of six years, that is, 1980-1985.
- to enable the National Literacy Programme participants to apply knowledge in developing the cultural, social and economic life.
- to enable the participants to perform community duties on the one hand and to exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship on the other.

The National Literacy Programme is administered by the Government of Botswana Department of Non-formal Education, in collaboration with other co-operating partners, especially non-governmental organisations such as the Lutheran Church of Botswana, the Botswana Christian Council and others. These also organise literacy classes.

The National Literacy Programme is provided for all illiterate people, irrespective of where they live in Botswana. It has, however, been found that it is patronised mostly by women. This is evidenced by the higher literacy rate for women than for men, 70.3% and 66.9% respectively (Survey 1997).

It has been found that men do not take literacy attendance as seriously as women. Because most illiterate men work as labourers in companies and most illiterate women attend literacy classes, it was thought prudent to follow the illiterate men to their places of work.

The idea of taking literacy to the workplace addresses Botswana Literacy Decade objective three which reads:

> Increasing popular participation and solidarity in efforts to combat illiteracy particularly through activities of the Government, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, parastatal organisations, voluntary organisations and community groups.

This has been adopted and adapted from International Literacy Year objective number three, which reads.

> Increasing popular participation, within and among countries, in efforts to combat illiteracy, particularly through activities of government, non-governmental organisations, and voluntary associations and community groups (ILY1990).

Twenty companies, parastatal organisations and a number of Government departments were approached as an experiment. Thereafter other companies joined. By the end of 1996, thirty companies/organisations were participating with a total of 839 learners.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In the "Literacy at the Workplace" Project, there is a partnership between the Department of Non-Formal Education and the company/organisation, with each having distinct responsibilities.

The Department of Non-formal Education's responsibilities are:

- to identify, recruit and train a teacher or identify one of the best literacy teachers in the area;
- to supply literacy learning materials in the form of primers and stationery (exercise books, pencils, erasers and flannel boards)

The company's/organisation's responsibilities are to:

- organise suitable meeting /teaching places;
- pay the literacy teacher (the payment is calculated at the Government rate plus a bit more);
- make sure that classes start at the agreed times and that learners attend;
- give learners time off work in order to attend classes.

DESCRIPTION

At present, the types of learners involved in the project vary, depending on the type of work they do and the organisations for which they work. The learners in the project comprise illiterate employees.

These illiterate employees are taught at their places of work. This means that the learners form their own literacy classes, that is, the classes would only have those illiterate workers in the organisations/companies. Other illiterate learners from other companies would not be allowed to join in another company's project.

Thus each organisation would only have employees of that particular organisation/company. This arrangement helps in that it is only people in the same organisation/company who would know the literacy status of the illiterate employees.

The level at which they start classes depends on their past experience and is also determined by the grade they obtain in the placement test.

The method used in teaching is basically the same as that used in the National Literacy Programme, that is the syllable method. The language used is Setswana, the National Language and the language of instruction of the National Literacy Programme. Local communities are not involved in the Literacy at the Workplace project, as the project is for those learners who are taught at their places of work. For illiterate people who do not work, they attend regular literacy classes that are conducted by the Department of Non-formal Education.

The literacy teachers are either chosen from the pool of existing Literacy Group Leaders or literacy teachers or potential teachers who are recruited and trained.

The teachers work part-time for the company. Some already teach in the regular literacy classes and these divide their time between the regular literacy classes and the literacy at the work place classes. The literacy teachers work very closely with the training co-ordinators of the organisations/companies, to whom they report. The reporting period is determined by the companies/organisations.

The materials used are prepared by the Department of Non-formal Education. These are the same as those used by learners in the regular classes. They are in the form of primers, a set of five in all. There are also supplementary reading materials used. These are prepared by the Inter-Agency Material Production Committee. No materials are supplied by the learners but plans are underway to introduce learner-generated materials and real literacy studies.

The literacy materials are mostly used in one way, that is, the literacy teacher being the main facilitator, leading and guiding the learners in their learning.

The project is jointly managed by the companies/organisations and the Department of Non-formal Education. When problems arise, they are reported to the training managers/co-ordinators, who immediately attend to them. For example, if learners lose interest in attending classes, the training managers or co-ordinators in consultation with the Department of Non-formal Education are at liberty to discontinue the classes or to take whatever action they deem appropriate. For example, at the Botswana Power Corporation, a problem arose because the workers work in gangs. In trying to identify the illiterate workers, it was realised that they were not in one gang and that meant disrupting a number of gangs in order to select the illiterate workers. The management had to attend to this problem as it did not want classes to disrupt work. Eventually, the management decided to solve the problem by forming a gang of illiterate workers and pulled it out of work for three months. For this period of three months, the identified workers attended classes and did no work. At the end of the three months the gang had to stop attending classes. Those workers who had not become literate during the course of the three months had to attend regular literacy classes during their spare time. After three months another gang of illiterate workers started literacy classes.

The Department of Non-formal Education influenced, in a way, the decision that the Botswana Power Corporation took, but it was purely left to the Botswana Power Corporation to decide how its illiterate employees were going to be taught. The Department of Non-formal Education came in when a class was put together. This is now the pattern of conducting classes at the Botswana Power Corporation, that is, pulling illiterate workers out of work for a period of three months.

Learners in the Literacy at the Workplace Project are not engaged in other activities, except in class discussions, whereas learners in the regular literacy classes engage in income-generating projects.

Employed learners attend classes during working hours; when the classes are over, they immediately go back to work, whereas those in regular classes, especially those who are unemployed, proceed to projects. If learners in the Literacy at the Workplace Project want to engage in any activity or to have links with any credit or savings organisation, they approach the Management for assistance or they arrange that for themselves.

The classes within the Project are evaluated by the companies/ organisations and the Department of Non-formal Education. The evaluation is mainly done to determine whether the workers handle work better after they have become literate. Most organisations/companies involved in the Project would like to see some change in the manner in which the workers handle work after the exposure to literacy classes, whether the training was relevant to the companies' needs.

At the end of the three month period, the learners are given a test and awarded certificates. The test is really to gauge whether the learners are literate or not. If they obtain a 50% pass, then they are declared literate. How they use the literacy skills gained depends on the companies/organisations and the concerned workers.

From meetings held with the management of the companies/organisations, it has become clear that general literacy is not suitable for most if not all the companies/organisations. Most companies/ organisations got into the Project because they thought the illiterate workers would be taught literacy for the work the company/organisation is involved in. For example, the Botswana Power Corporation is mainly interested in workers who can read metres and can measure the right depths of trenches etc. Knowing how to read, write and count in the abstract is fine, but the Power Corporation would rather put the workers through a tailor-made literacy training that would suit its needs.

After the illiterate workers have become literate, they decide whether they want to continue learning. The management helps the learners; some who performed better after the training got either some promotion or a raise in salary.

CONCLUSION

This general exposition is meant to give an idea of what is happening in the Project. As already mentioned, it is clear that the Project needs some rethinking. It is not enough to put illiterate employees into a project that is general, as the companies'/organisations' needs are not the same.

It has also been realised that the consultation process between the Department of Non-formal Education and the companies is weak. It should be improved. A lot has to be done to improve the Project and make it relevant to the needs of the different companies/organisations.

— Marty Legwaila

Marty Legwaila works in the Department of Nonformal Education in the Ministry of Education, Government of Botswana, Gaborone.

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EGYPT

CEOSS Adult Literacy Programme

The literacy case described is part of the Education Programme of the Egyptian NGO, the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS). The adult literacy class is part of CEOSS' rural development program. It is targeted at girls and women from the age 15 to 40 who either dropped out of the formal educational system or failed to join at all.

The group being described is an existing group in a programme of literacy that started in April 1998. The girls and women are engaged in the provision of laboring services in an agricultural context. This is the main reason behind their deprivation of the formal education opportunity. The services they provide include farming and animal feeding, as well as the family-related activities of child bearing and rearing, amongst others. The literacy group are homogeneous in the sense that that are all female but there are mixed levels of literacy skills. Some of them, specially the younger ones who attended one or two primary school levels, are more literate than most of the older ones who never had the opportunity to participate in the formal education system.

The curriculum used with the group is called the *New Teacher*. The material has been adapted by the textbook writers to suit different groups such as women, farmers and labourers. The approach adopted in the literacy programme is a combination of the whole language approach, real literacies language and REFLECT. However, the main focus is on whole words. The learning programme begins with a picture representing a relevant issue in the learner's life as a means of stimulating discussion. The use of pictures leads to the introduction of sentences, then whole words and finally to the shape and sound of letters. By the end of each lesson, it is expected that the learner will have learned and assimilated two letters. The language used in the literacy programme is Arabic which is the language of the participants.

The participation of local communities in the organisation of the CEOSS literacy programme is considered to be essential to success in achieving higher literacy rates. Local community participation takes various forms. These include the provision of buildings for the classes, the encouragement of women and girls to participate in the programme, and helping in the recruitment of suitable facilitators. Funding comes through CEOSS; the participants do not pay anything for the classes.

The facilitators of literacy classes are called 'Leaders' because they lead the whole process of learning. They are selected from the local communities in which the literacy classes exist. They are normally graduates with no previous experience of dealing with literacy issues. They are trained by CEOSS prior to starting as facilitators in the field. Their training focuses on development issues, leadership and training skills. The training programme for literacy class facilitators consists of 20 hours of contact time. They are given a monthly salary of LE 60, in addition to some other incentives such as a percentage of pay based on the results their students achieve.

The materials used revolve around the New Teacher series. The material in the book is adapted by the facilitators to suit different target groups such as women, farmers and labourers. The learners also participate in the production of material based on their own contexts and realities.

To sustain development programmes, a village development committee is set up to support inputs into the development process. An education and literacy subcommittee consisting of interested volunteers is formed particularly to supervise the literacy classes. This committee is involved in the selection of facilitators, recruitment of learners, supervision of teaching and evaluation of the programmes.

To reinforce what is learned in the literacy classes, CEOSS encourages the learners to participate in other activities such as income generation and microcredit programmes, health and nutrition training, and environmental awareness raising activities, which help the learners to use their newly acquired literacy skills. These include writing words, their names and numbers.

The literacy programme has three levels, with each level lasting for nine months. At the end of each level, the learners are tested. Those who succeed go to the next level. At the end of level three, a final examination takes place with supervision from the national government agency responsible for adult literacy. Those who satisfy the examiners receive a literacy certificate that enables them to apply for government or private sector jobs. The younger students can join the formal education system based on their results in the literacy programme.

—Hamdi Qenawi, Cairo

Hamdi Qenawi has been working in various sectoral development programs in Egypt for more than twenty years , especially in training and evaluation. He is currently a free-lance development worker.

GUATEMALA

Bilingual literacy in rural indigenous communities

CONALFA (The National Committee for Adult Literacy) in Guatemala has been providing bilingual literacy services for the indigenous population of Guatemala since 1985. Over the past 14 years, 21 Mayan languages have been written down and standard alphabets have been largely agreed upon for all but one Mayan language, K'iche, which is still having a dispute over a vowel.

In the Guatemalan Peace Accords, which were signed by the government in 1996 after 32 years of violence, there is a call for a concerted effort to achieve 70% adult literacy, in as many indigenous languages as is technically possible by 2001. This is an ambitious goal, given that Guatemala's literacy rates are among the lowest in the region, particularly within indigenous rural areas and especially among rural Mayan women, whose literacy rates average between 40-45%.

CONALFA does not provide direct service; rather, it establishes contracts with non-governmental agencies, private volunteer organizations, municipalities and faith-based organizations that want to provide literacy instruction. By signing a *convenio* (contract) with CONALFA, an organization receives training and a modest salary for the literacy animators and facilitators (250 *quetzales*/month about $35), primers, monitoring and evaluation tools for learners, and certification when a learner successfully passes from one level to another.

The current structure of the bilingual literacy program looks like this:

BASIC LITERACY: 6 months of native language instruction: reading and writing in one of 21 Mayan languages; 3 months of "transference": oral Spanish and the continuation of Mayan language instruction.

POST-LITERACY (LEVELS 1 AND 2): 9 months of programming for each level in Spanish for second language learners with some re-enforcement of Mayan language reading and writing.

ISSUES OF THE CONALFA LITERACY EXPERIENCE:

- Currently, there is a 70% dropout rate among CONALFA-sponsored programs.
- According to research conducted by CONALFA between 1995-1997, there are many factors that participants say influence whether they persist in a literacy class. They range from "the center is too far from their community" to "the teachers talk too much". Unfortunately, such issues have not been incorporated into the strategic planning and organizing of the program, therefore the same issues continue.
- Many facilitators are not able to read and write their own language well, although they can speak it. This makes instruction difficult, because animators are often not comfortable with their own ability to teach in a Mayan language.
- Because of inadequate training and support, instruction tends to be primer-based, relying on the formal school experiences of the facilitators that were based on rote learning, banking education models. For this reason, dropout rates are high, and comments like "we don't like it" were common in research conducted by CONALFA.
- Often facilitators do not receive the required materials for the instruction. Since the instruction is based on lessons in a textbook, facilitators are not prepared to use materials and found texts that exist in the community for literacy learning.
- Frequently, learners have no immediate use for Spanish language, no opportunity to practise it and therefore forget it in a short amount of time.

FUTURE LITERACY PROGRAMMING:

A new four-year project called *COMAL* Project ('Mayan Literate Communities', the joint bilingual literacy project sponsored by Save the Children, the Center for International Education and ADEJUC, a Guatemalan NGO) will address some of these issues by working with Guatemalan NGOs who would like to implement what are called "integrated community literacy activities".

- **Mayan language materials.** Written Mayan language texts are still largely restricted to literacy texts and very few pieces of literature. Many of the community texts are in Spanish only. To create a country where bilingual literacy is valued and practised, attention will be given to developing Mayan language literature, as well as developing and using Mayan language materials for community tasks and documentation purposes.

- **Literacy comes second: Literacy and community development.** Literacy learning can be tied to a community's current activities or activities that learners are interested in and can be integrated with literacy learning. Current examples include:
    - micro-credit and lending programs for women
    - artisan projects
    - farming and agriculture activities
    - women's and children's health
    - civic education

- **More attention to facilitator and animator training.** Training will be provided on an on-going basis, so that animators and facilitators have regular opportunities for reflection on their practice and time to learn about and practise new techniques for literacy teaching and learning.

- **Introduction of adult learning theory and nonformal education theory and practice.** COMAL hopes to help animators and facilitators to move away from banking education models and pedagogy based on formal school instruction. By learning how adults learn, what their motivations are to become literate, and how animators and facilitators can create adult-focused teaching and learning, participants may be more willing to attend literacy learning classes.

— Joanie Cohen-Mitchell

Joanie Cohen-Mitchell prepared this case study with input from Hiram Martinez and Kathy Searle. All three are staff in the COMAL project based in Quiche, Guatemala.

HAITI

A Private Initiative National Programme

The *Maman Machann*[1] program is a literacy effort that began in the early 1990s in the greater Port-au-Prince area. It initially received funding from UNICEF, which provided start-up costs for programs in the slum areas of Port-au-Prince, Cite Soleil, as well as a few centers in Grand Goave and Croix-de-Bouquets. Although all the centers in the Port-au-Prince area have since closed due to lack of funding, as recently as 1995[2], there were fourteen programs operating throughout the southeast being supported by the Catholic Diocese of Jacmel. The program was developed by the group *Misyon Alfa*, a Catholic group that had been responsible for the national literacy campaign that began in 1985[3]. The goal of the *Maman Machann* program was a simple one, to help women market workers do better in the marketplace by providing them with literacy skills.

In the city of Jacmel, where I lived and worked, the program, which began in early 1991, evolved over time into a full-fledged family education program which offered both adult literacy for women and early childhood education for children ages 0-6, parenting and health education as well as accounting classes. But, it did not start out that way.

PREPLANNING: ORGANIC MODEL DEVELOPMENT

The first phase of the *Maman Machann* program consisted of an informal needs assessment carried out by two local facilitators hired by Misyon Alfa. These two women, Monique and Nanette, spent about three months at the local Jacmel market, talking to the women who were hawking their wares – tomato sellers, rice sellers, makers of Dous (the locally famous coconut sweet) and larger scale vendors who traveled to Port-au-Prince weekly to bring back things like pots and pans and contraband from China. The two facilitators engaged the women by asking questions about their educational background, their aspirations for themselves and their children, their thoughts about schooling and training and particularly about the skills of reading, writing and maths. Comments made by many women working in the market were somewhat similar[4] and included statements like: "I don't have much use for reading and writing, but I would like to be better at using numbers". "I often think that I am being taken advantage of because I can't use numbers on the paper, I have to use my fingers". "If I could do my sums better, I would feel better when I had to deal with the middleman". "I want to be more of a *Madan Sara* type, but I need to be able to read and write". "I'm too old to learn to read and write, but I want my children to know how".

After gathering this information and continuing to make themselves known by the forty or so women who had permanent stalls in the market, the two facilitators decided to offer a numeracy class. They began spreading the word through the market that on Tuesdays and Thursdays after the market ended, at about four o'clock each day, a group would be meeting in the church hall across the street from the market to practise using numbers for their market work.

NUMERACY CLASSES

About fifteen women began attending the Tuesday and Thursday sessions. They would gather in the hall after the market ended, usually with their small children. Some of the women's children would be picked up by older siblings after school ended, but there were still 8-10 children under the age of six who played unsupervised for the one and a half to two hours the group met.

The facilitators, who were trained by *Misyon Alfa* staff and received a small salary from them, began the numeracy classes by using only found objects from the marketplace and a chalkboard. Together, the group practised basic mathematics; addition; subtraction; multiplication and simple maths problems, all based on the usual work the women did in the market. As the group went on, it became obvious to the women that the skills of reading and writing would complement the maths skills they were learning, and they began to talk with the facilitators about other kinds of classes that could be offered.

Again, the two facilitators did an informal needs assessment with the group. The two most popular responses included wanting classes in basic accounting and basic literacy in Haitian Creole. The facilitators asked the women in the group to go out and talk to some other women market workers who might be interested in these classes, and they would then hold a meeting and plan a course of study to satisfy the group.

LITERACY PLUS

When a group of about 25 women gathered to talk about extending the current numeracy classes, a new need arose in the group. The women found that having their children running around unsupervised while they worked in the market was difficult for them, and, by adding additional two days a week for the new classes, it would become impossible to have their children with them and really concentrate and learn. The women wanted to come up with a solution so that they could continue to work at the market, study afterwards and have their children supervised while they studied. The two facilitators suggested that perhaps they could approach the Diocese to see if there would be someone available to supervise the children and play with them while their mothers studied. The group agreed that this was a good idea, and they decided that they wanted to move ahead with a basic literacy course in Haitian Creole, if they could figure out the dilemma of child care.

The Church administration agreed that child care for the children could be provided. However, the stipulation from the Diocese was that there should be two care-givers for the children, and that one woman from the literacy class provide child care alongside the hired child care provider. Again, the women and the facilitators met to discuss this arrangement, and in this meeting also began the basic literacy course. Over the course of the next month, while the group was meeting "informally" to set up a system for rotating child care and sufficient class meetings during the week, the two facilitators began instruction in reading and writing as the group organized itself. They did this in a variety of ways including: taking notes on the blackboard as the women spoke and then reading it back to the class, asking group members to practise their writing and numeracy skills when the facilitator made lists of needed class supplies, designing schedules for the child care on the blackboard and asking the women to make copies to put on the wall, listing children's names and ages, labeling objects for the children's class, and physically organizing the space for the children's class.

By the end of the period of organization and tough negotiation (not all the women wanted to spend one class period with the children), two classes were running three afternoons a week for two hours. Basic literacy classes and child care were happening at the same time, with fifteen to twenty women in attendance, and ten to fifteen small children aged 0-6.

Using the *Misyon Alfa* method developed for Haiti's 1985 national literacy campaign, the group began a literacy process that was based on the original objectives of the 1985 program. These objectives were to:

1) open the women's eyes to their reality, organize to define their needs and formulate projects to realize their needs;

2) develop a critical awareness;

3) participate in decision-making and production processes;

4) develop their understanding;

5) arrive at an awareness of their own true (human) value; and

6) gain access to the goods and services that they required.

Instruction in the Misyon Alfa program is based on a mixture of Freirean problem-posing methodology using discussion and analysis of shared problems to come to a critical awareness of one's socio-economic situation, combined with phonics instruction which accompanies the generative words and themes from the problem-posing strategies. Because of its phonetic nature, Haitian Creole words can be broken down into syllables for pronunciation and writing. Although the two facilitators relied on already developed *Misyon Alfa* texts[5] for a large part of the literacy instruction, they were very good at improvising "generative themes" based on the women's experiences in the marketplace and other life issues like the child care arrangement. The two facilitators often created entire lessons based on an event that had happened in the market that day6 and were able to ask questions, facilitate dialogue and have the women do some writing and reading about the issue, all in a two hour period.

LITERACY EXTENSIONS

As the literacy program gained more notoriety in Jacmel, other local projects wanted to use the women in the literacy program to meet their objectives. The local *Sant de Sante* (Health Center) asked the facilitators if they could come to the literacy class and talk about maternal and child health. The facilitators said that they would ask the women if they were interested. The women were very interested, particularly in the child health information, but they wanted the Health Center to administer vaccines to their children and be available to treat illnesses while they were in child care at the church, because it was difficult for the women to get to the Health Center during the day while they were at the market. After some negotiations, the Health Center staff began coming regularly and conducting health and parenting workshops for the women that were later incorporated into their literacy studies.

Similarly, after the basic literacy course, some of the women wanted to study basic accounting and even learn about credit schemes. They contacted a local agency that usually worked with male farmers. After negotiations with the women, the agency began offering basic accounting classes for those who were interested. Alongside the accounting teacher, one of the literacy facilitators would aid in the instruction to make the difficult material more accessible to the newly literate women.

Another activity that happened over time was that some of the women who had been involved in the rotating child care expressed an interest in becoming pre-school teachers. In the area of Jacmel, PLAN International runs many pre-school programs and also offers training for locally hired teachers. Negotiations ensued between the *Misyon Alfa* program and PLAN, and in 1993, some of the mothers began attending evening and weekend training programs in pre-school teaching and early childhood education.

In 1995, some of the original group of women, who had begun meeting in 1991, had been working with the literacy facilitators to write a petition to the local municipality, proposing that they build a child care facility in the marketplace. Their rationale was that the women would go to the market more often, stay longer, earn more money and be comfortable knowing that their children were being properly taken care of. This petition was signed by about fifty women market workers. It was accompanied by a survey done by the group that included interviews with women market workers talking about the need for child care, as well as a list of children with their ages. The petition also had attached to it the names of four women who had completed a training program in pre-school education with PLAN and were available to staff the child care center. According to the facilitators, this community research project, undertaken by the women, had taken almost a year to organize and carry out.

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[1] Haitian Creole, meaning Mother market worker or meres marchandes in French

[2] Personal information gathered while completing sector diagnosis in Haiti, April-June 1995.

[3] In the early 1980's the Catholic Conference of Religious priests and nuns proposed the organization of a national literacy program that would prepare the Haitian people for effective and active participation in society. After the Pope's visit to Haiti in 1983 in which he declared that "something must change in this country", the Bishops Conference adopted the priests' and nuns' proposal and began, in 1985, a national literacy campaign, Misyon Alfa. It was designed to educate some 3,000,000 Haitian adults, regardless of religious affiliation, in basic Creole reading, writing and communication skills. Funded by International non-governmental organizations such as the Inter-American Foundation, Catholic Relief Service, Development et Paix, Canadian International Development Agency, USAID, and OXFAM America, the program used Freirean techniques of providing people with educational skills so that they could critically analyze and participate in the building of democracy and development in their communities and nation.

Misyon Alfa used community members as literacy teachers and was directed by a national staff organized through local Church dioceses and parishes. Set up as a five year enterprise, the program was to be carried out in a series of 10 semesters, gradually increasing the number of participants until reaching full coverage throughout the country. Labeled a Communist threat by the Manigat regime, Misyon Alfa was suspended in 1988 by the Bishops Conference. Misyon Alfa represented an important experiment for the potential of a national literacy effort conducted without government involvement. In the history of world literacy programs, no other non-governmental body had attempted a challenge of this magnitude and vision (Miller, 1989).

[4] Personal communication with Myrtho Celestin (Misyon Alfa), 1995.

[5] *Goute Sel* was the primer developed for the 1986-1987 national campaign. *Goute Sel* means "taste of salt", which is the only substance that can wake a zombie from his/her trance. Thus, the metaphor for the Haitian people after 26 years of dictatorship was apt.

[6] I experienced one such class where a women who was selling "Haitian" rice was verbally attacked by a market stall neighbor who sold the cheaper "Miami" rice. Although the woman in the literacy class thought she was doing the right thing by buying indigenous Haitian rice that is often a few cents more expensive per kilo, her neighbor accused her of price gouging. This made for an incredible "generative theme" that resonated with all the women in the class, and the facilitators were able to use this energy to get the women to '"theorize" about the causes of problems like the one described above. It was a very powerful thing to watch.

—Joanie Cohen Mitchell, CIE, University of Massachusetts

Joanie Cohen Mitchell lived in Haiti for two years, working as a teachers' trainer and literacy volunteer with Misyon Alfa. She observed the Manman Machann program over a period of four years.

INDONESIA
New Approaches to Functional Literacy

The motivating goal of nearly every person who enters a learning group in Indonesia is to increase their family income through learning new skills. However, most educators assume that illiterate learners must learn to read and write before they could learn skills or join an income generating group. The results of the new functional literacy program in Indonesia have proven that assumption wrong. Learners progress faster and are more motivated to learn reading, writing and math skills if they can learn these skills in conjunction with practical skills training and income generating activities.

One reason learners progress faster with the skills-based program is that they already have some basic literacy skills. Indonesia has done a lot to expand its basic education services over the past 20 years. As a result, approximately 75% of the literacy learners already have some primary school education, although they do not have the functional literacy competencies they need for solving problems in daily life. Under the old literacy program, these people were lumped together with the 'pure illiterates' to start from book one of the literacy primers. Learners progressed slowly because they had to start over and because they were treated like illiterates.

The new functional literacy program assumes that the learning group is multi-level. The tutors (facilitators) are trained to divide learners into small groups to help each other and to practice reading and writing activities that match their skill level. The program distinguishes three levels of literacy development: Basic Skills, Guided Learning (how to use literacy skills in daily life), and Self-Learning (how to meet one's own learning needs through finding reading materials, joining community development programs, planning activities, and so forth).

The majority of the tutors are primary school teachers. They get credit points for promotion when they volunteer as tutors for community-education programs. They also receive a monthly stipend of Rp.50,000 ($10.) They usually meet with the group for two hours, 2 – 3 times a week. (generally 6 months a year over a three-year period – if the plans from the field test stay on track.) All the tutors participate in a 5-day (40-hour) training program. The government's

Directorate of Community Education (*Dikmas*) funds the tutor training, stipends, learning materials and learning fund, and monitors the program. The local community provides the place to meet in a home, school, mosque, church or community center.

The basic learning approach combines literacy skills with learning by doing. Every topic that the learners study is explored with the following learning activities:1) discussion, 2) writing, 3) reading, 4) maths, and 5) action or application. The tutors are trained to draw upon a variety of methods and literacy approaches to engage the learners in active learning. To stimulate discussion of the local environment and the learner's experience, the tutor guides the learners in making maps, charts and timelines similar to the ones used in the REFLECT method and Participatory Rural Appraisal. Writing activities are based on whole language and learner generated materials approaches. Beginners start by making pictures to learn how to manage a pencil and make symbols to convey meaning. Learners who can already write are encouraged to develop their skills by writing their ideas, knowledge and stories from daily life.

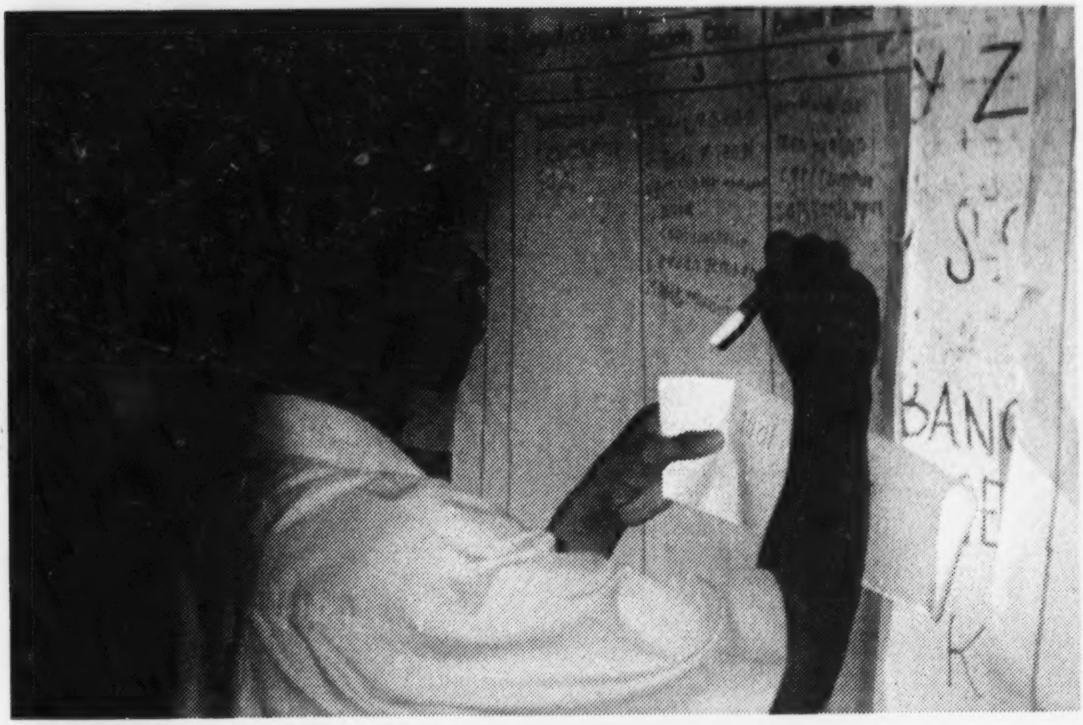
For learners who cannot yet read, the tutors use the language experience approach where the learners start by reading sentences they have spoken themselves. These sentences are written on strips of paper and then cut successively into words, syllables and letters to help the learners identify the parts of written language. The learners also make their own dictionaries and alphabet posters with the words they learn. Maths activities are based on practical skills and money management. Practical skill activities bring all of the learning together into one package.

For example, if a group wants to make and sell mats, they discuss their ideas and make a learning plan. They practise writing the names of materials and instructions for making the mats. They read the results of their writing as well as a leaflet on mat-making. They use maths to calculate the materials and costs for making the mats. They practise making the mats. Then they analyze the potential for marketing the mats and write a plan. Finally, they calculate sales prices and keep records of their sales and profits (or losses).

Most of the learning materials are made by the learners themselves, and include things like shopping lists, proposals, recipes, instructions, measurements, account books, etc. In addition to learning literacy together with practical skills and income generating, the learners also develop functional literacy competencies by managing the activities of their learning group. Research by Ordonez and Napitapulu (1998) shows that, although the poor work hard, they lack specific skills that will help them get out of poverty. These skills include the ability to organize, make decisions, plan for the future, work collaboratively, manage money, access service institutions and get access to markets and employment opportunities.

The women are making a casava crisp snack to sell. (Product is size of tortilla – see bag in front.) They wrote the recipe, calculated costs and planned their business for their reading, writing and math activities.

The group of women are filling in a matrix about a business activity they want to improve. The first row is pictures of steps in the process. In the second row they write information about each step. The third row is for identifying problems. (The learner second from left is helping her fellow learner spell the things she wants to write.)



Young man is filling out a needs analysis table for planning their learning activities.

The paper in his hand says jual (sell). He is writing something he wants to learn about selling (cow or meat or milk).

KEGIATAN/MIHAT	**KEMAMPUAN**	**(ABILITY)**
(Activity/Interest)	**Sudah Bisa** **(can already do)**	**Belum bisa** **(don't know yet)**
Raising a cow	feeding watering etc.	what to do when cow is sick

The functional literacy program helps build the learners' ability in all of these areas by designing learning activities that involve them in making decisions and plans to manage their own learning.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional Skill:	Strategy
Organizing:	The learning group is responsible for choosing and managing their own meeting times by making a contract. They are free to reduce or change times during busy seasons or holidays. However, they commit themselves to follow their contract and to meet regularly.
Making Decisions:	Each learning group decides on their own topics and learning activities. The groups are given guidelines and forms for making their own learning plans.
Planning:	The tutor helps the learners make a plan and write a proposal to receive a learning fund of Rp.100,000 which they can use for any type of learning activities they choose. Groups usually choose to learn a practical skill or try out an income-generating activity.
Managing Money:	Many groups start their own savings-lending club and learn to keep written records of their transactions
Working Together:	The literacy activities are usually connected to practical skills or income generating projects. The learners have to work together to learn the skills and divide up responsibilities for different tasks.
Accessing Service Agencies:	The tutor takes the learners to visit government agencies and other organizations such as health post, agriculture service, post office, bank, etc. to obtain reading materials and services. They collect materials such as posters, forms, brochures and booklets to use in their lessons. The goal is to prepare them to be self-learners who can find their own information to solve the problems of daily life.

The program is currently managed nationally through *Dikmas*' provincial, district and local offices. However, the government is beginning a decentralization process, and in the future, local programs will be managed by a community learning center that is funded from district level government. Currently, the groups are monitored by local fieldworkers, subdistrict supervisors and/or district-level community educators. The tutors participate in a tutors' association that meets monthly to discuss ideas and address problems. The tutors have the main responsibility for evaluation. At the beginning of the course, they assess the learners' skill levels and learning interests. Each month they fill in a progress checklist as they observe the learners developing various skills and competencies. A test has been developed and is currently being analyzed to develop some sort of quantitative standard for each of the three levels of functional literacy. There is no certification test. However, learners can take a primary school equivalency test which is recognized by the government and employers. A number of learners from the functional literacy groups, who had some prior schooling, were able to pass that test after one year of study.

Nearly 90% of the learners are women. When given the opportunity to plan their own learning activities, they naturally chose things related to their immediate needs, circumstances and roles as mothers, farmers, housewives and petty trading. The majority of the income-generating activities tend toward selling snacks and small handicrafts. However, the functional skills they are learning for management, decision-making, planning, etc will be of use to them as they begin to identify a wider range of ways to improve the economy and general well-being of themselves, their families and their communities.

We have begun a new phase of action research to develop action learning guides to help the learning groups explore and solve local problems (environment, social, family, health, etc) through discussion, reading, writing, maths, activities and participatory action learning techniques.

Background information about the Functional Literacy Field Test

39 Master Trainers from 9 provinces and central level
250 Community Educators at 49 SKBs (District Learning Center)
392 Fieldworkers from 196 subdistricts
196 Supervisors from 196 subdistricts
250 Dikmas Staff from District Offices
24 Heads of District Learning Center (SKB)
24 Heads of Dikmas District Offices
1230 Tutors (500 were trained in year one, 730 in year two)
12,300 Learners (5000 started in year one, 7300 started in year two)

Due to the immense size of the field test, you can be sure that there are a lot of variations on the ideal model described above. Variations range from dismal relapses into traditional rote learning to wonderfully creative innovations that have been incorporated into the new training manuals. The program is still in process of developing.

—Joan Dixon

Joan Dixon has been working with the Directorate of Community Education (Ministry of Education and Culture) in Indonesia for the past three years to develop a community-based functional literacy program.

Reference: Ordonez V, Kasaju Prem K, Seshadri C, Basic Education for Empowerment of the Poor: report of a regional study on literacy as a tool for empowerment of the poor, Bangkok, UNESCO PROAP, 1998.

MALI

Save the Children Adult Literacy Program

INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY

The information on which this case study is based was collected during a research study on the socio-economic effects of participating in literacy programs on women. The study examined the participation of women in the literacy program implemented by Save the Children in the Kolondieba district of Mali, focusing primarily on women in four villages in 1995. In this case study, I have used the past tense, because the fieldwork took place during nine months in 1994-1995, and certain aspects of the program may have changed since then.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1. General characteristics of the classes and learners

Save the Children has worked in the Kolondieba district of Mali since 1987, and managed development activities in the domains of child survival, natural resources management (agriculture and environment), small business/credit/savings, and education. Adult functional literacy classes were initiated with the goal of providing support for the other development domains. Objectives were to make men and women capable of reading, writing, and doing arithmetic in Bambara, and thus to increase the number of men and women who were able to administer the development activities of Save the Children and correctly use the development materials. Thus many of the participants in the adult literacy programs were participants in other development projects run by Save the Children, although this was not necessarily the case. The literacy program ran annually during the four dry season months from January to the end of April.

Levels of literacy in the villages were generally quite low, but there was a mixture of skill levels in the classes observed during the study. The curriculum was intended for learners who were non-literate at the start of each year's program. In 1995, Save the Children-Mali was in the process of developing a second-year program for those who wanted to continue their literacy learning beyond the basics. The second-year curriculum was essentially complete by the end of the 1995 literacy program, and plans to implement it during the 1996 program were in place.

Originally, Save the Children created literacy classes for men and women together. They found, however, that women did not participate well when they were in class with men. Therefore, they were gradually creating more and more gender-specific literacy centers, and they had found that women participating in women-only classes were more successful at becoming literate than those in mixed gender classes. In 1995, some villages had mixed-gender classes, while some held separate classes for men and women.

2. Teaching approach

The teaching methods were fairly traditional and didactic, and used primarily a phonics approach. Teachers followed a literacy primer and a numeracy primer. The language used in the literacy classes was Bambara, an official national language of Mali, and the first language and main spoken language of the learners.

3. Provision of resources

Although Save the Children provided some material support for the literacy programs, their strategy was to slowly withdraw this support each year. The specific plan was that during the first year of a program in a village, Save the Children provided notebooks, primers, and slates for all the learners, four kerosene lamps, a blackboard, a table and chair for the teacher, a ruler, chalk, pencil, eraser, and the teacher's guide. (The teacher's guide and primers were published by DNAFLA, the Malian national adult literacy organization). The village itself provided the building and the benches. During the second year, Save the Children provided materials for 15 learners, and the village needed to provide the rest. During the third year, only chalk and the substance to make blackboards were provided.

4. Literacy teachers

At the village level, Save the Children functioned largely through the creation of village development committees that were composed of people from the village and that were linked to traditional village associations. Members of the committees received training by Save the Children to plan and carry out a variety of development activities. Since development committees were linked to traditional village associations, literacy teachers or spermicide salespersons, for example, came from the village and saw themselves as working for the village and not for Save the Children. Thus they were either paid by the village (often in kind) or not paid at all.

In terms of the adult literacy program in particular, then, decisions about the literacy program in a village were made primarily by the village adult literacy committee. Literacy teachers were recruited from the villages and trained by Save the Children, with unschooled volunteers attending a 35-40 day training session and those who had been to school attending a 15 day session. Some of the facilitators had become literate through the Save the Children literacy program, some through a development program which had worked previously in the region, and some had been to school. All the facilitators worked part-time, and they were generally new to the work. Three of four literacy teachers interviewed during the study said they received no compensation of any kind for their teaching, because the village had not agreed to pay them. The fourth teacher said that he received no money but that all the young male learners in his class came and worked in his field one day during each rainy season as compensation.

5. Teaching-learning materials

As stated above, the materials included one literacy and one numeracy primer, a teacher's guide for the teacher, and slates, notebooks, pens, and chalk for the learners. No materials were written by learners, and no supplementary materials were used; however, possibilities for incorporating other materials in the future were discussed by Save the Children-Mali education officials during the 1995 program.

Actual materials used varied according to village. Classes observed during the study had the following characteristics:

Village One: Teacher had a primer, guide, blackboard, and chalk,
while learners had slates and chalk only

Village Two: Teacher had a primer, blackboard, and chalk, students
had no materials

Village Three: Teacher had a primer, guide, blackboard, and chalk,
students had notebooks and pens only

Village Four: Teacher had a primer, guide, blackboard, and chalk,
students all had school notebooks and pens, a few students had primers

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM AND PROBLEMS

As described in Point 4 above, at the village level the program was managed by an adult literacy committee composed of village residents.

Save the Children-Mali had an Education Sector staff located in Kolondieba which implemented and organized the literacy program at the district level. Staff members monitored classes by conducting random visits to literacy classes in the villages.

One problem observed during the study was poor implementation of the program in some villages. Some villages held no classes at all in 1995, some held classes for men only, and some held classes for women only. In one of the four villages in the study, the class consisted of adolescent children only. Villages often held far fewer classes than were expected by Save the Children.

One possible reason for the sometimes poor implementation of the program was the poor compensation of teachers. As stated in point 4, above, villages were often unwillingly to pay teachers for their services.

Another problem was the lack of a critical mass of skilled individuals who could do the teaching in the villages. One of the villages involved in the study, for example, had an excellent teacher. However, he was the only one, and he also happened to hold so many other development responsibilities that he simply did not have time to teach class. Other villages experienced similar problems finding individuals with the necessary skills to teach literacy.

A further problem which hindered learning were the poor conditions under which classes were sometimes held. Of the four villages in the study, only one had a classroom for literacy classes, and the other three held classes in the open air, generally equipped with only a blackboard and chair for the teacher, and some benches or a log for the learners. In three of the villages, women's classes were held at night, and the two or three available kerosene lamps did not provide sufficient light.

Generally the most willing participants of literacy classes in the villages were young men who had the most free time. Save the Children-Mali staff members stressed the importance of women's literacy, but it was difficult for women to go to class because they had so much other work to do. To remedy this problem, some villages held classes for women at night (8-10pm, for example), after the day's work was done. Sometimes villages also mandated that certain women attend class. In one of the villages involved in the study, for example, the village decided that one woman from each extended household would participate in the literacy program. Male heads of households then decided which women would attend classes. When women were obliged to go, motivation to learn literacy skills was understandably low. (On the other hand, many female participants were highly motivated to succeed.)

LINKS WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES

Many literacy learners were engaged in other development activities, some of which required literacy. For example, one female learner sold spermicides in the village, and used a notebook to record sales. Other examples would be record-keeping in income-generation projects, or taking notes during development committee meetings. On the other hand, many program participants did not have the literacy skills necessary for functional use of literacy. The study also found that several of the functionally literate women in the villages never used their literacy skills outside of class at all.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

A literacy and a numeracy test were given to program participants at the end of each annual program. The scores were translated into four literacy levels, as follows: Level 1, know how to read, write legibly, carry out the four arithmetic operations; Level 2, know how to read, write legibly, and do addition and subtraction; Level 3, know how to read and write legibly and know numbers; Level 4, are fair at reading and writing, and do not know their numbers well. Save the Children–Mali education officials tallied the results and included the information in their reports. Information on other aspects of program evaluation is incomplete.

LITERACY PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

As stated above, it was hoped that participants who finished the first year's program would continue with literacy classes by participating in a more advanced curriculum the following year. While the first year curriculum focused on the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, the second year curriculum focused on using literacy specifically for development purposes. The goal of the program was for learners to continue to use their literacy skills to carry out development activities organized by Save the Children-Mali and run locally by village development committees.

—Laurie Puchner, University of Missouri – St. Louis

Laurie Puchner conducted this research as part of her field work for her doctorate degree.

CASE STUDY

NEPAL

Health Education and Adult Literacy (HEAL): World Education

BACKGROUND

In the face of major health problems, and to augment the efforts of the existing village health workers, the Ministry of Health in Nepal invested in the training and support of Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), local community members who provide health education and information, distribute oral rehydration packets, keep simple statistics on births, deaths and illnesses, and arrange for immunisations. A CHV is typically the only person in a rural village with training in modern health practices. Because rural women are often hesitant to discuss health issues such as family planning and prenatal care with men, female CHVs are particularly valuable. Because the CHV training programme of the 1980s required literacy skills, finding women to serve as CHVs was difficult. Therefore, in 1989, the Ministry of Health started to address this problem by recruiting and training approximately 28,000 illiterate female community health volunteers. The CHV training was redesigned so that it could be used with illiterate women. Female CHVs were to provide similar services as male CHVs, but in addition, they were expected to organise and conduct once-a-month 2-3 hour meetings (Mothers' Group meetings) for young and/or expectant mothers from rural communities. These are intended to be the main venue for disseminating information about health to young women.

The illiterate CHVs were at a clear disadvantage in carrying out their responsibilities because of their lack of literacy skills. Many reported not being able to keep records of births, deaths and illnesses, not fully participating in in-service training programmes, and having a lower status in the community because they were uneducated.

Until 1990, the CHVs were provided with a stipend of 100 rupees (approx US$2) each month. When the government stopped giving this stipend, health staff reported that the activity level of many CHVs decreased or stopped altogether. Some of the female CHVs reported that two things would motivate them to continue to serve even without compensation, and would make their task easier - literacy skills (both for the CHVs and for the women with whom they worked) and recognition from the community that the CHVs' work was valued.

Between 1991 and 1994, World Education with funding from USAID ran a pilot project of a 21-month course of literacy and health education for a number of female CHVs and the Mothers' Group members with whom they worked. The aim was to strengthen the skills of the CHV, and to produce a group of literate women with increased health and family planning knowledge and skills, and self-confidence both in dealing with the health care system and in making decisions that affect their lives. The pilot was implemented in one district in Nepal. In the first two years of the project, 77 classes were held; in total, almost 2000 women had participated in the project.

PHASES

The program consisted of three phases.

Phase 1: The existing six-month national basic adult literacy course, which provides instruction in reading, writing and simple mathematics based on content which relates directly to the lives of learners including such topics as health, conservation, family planning, agriculture and social problems, was used as the basis for this phase. The curriculum is delivered through two 144-page books entitled *Naya Goreto ('The New Trail')*, which includes an introduction to the alphabet and numbers, the formation of words and simple mathematical calculations, and later on serialised stories and comics which help to build up the reading skills of literacy learners.

Groups met six days a week for two hours each day from mid-November (after the harvest work is mostly completed) to late May, a total of about 300 hours. The facilitators were in most cases nominated by the learners and given training by World Education. The instructional strategy was participatory and hands-on, helping the participants to learn from one another; the lessons, for example, included games which learners took turns in leading. Classes were supervised by specially recruited teachers or health post staff who visited each class twice a month to provide support and technical assistance to the facilitator. A group leader, normally the CHV who is usually also a participant in the literacy class, plays a special role as an aide to the facilitator, helping to arrange facilities and materials, as well as to encourage and support the women attending the class.

In addition, the project created twelve half-hour supplementary poster discussion sessions during the six-month basic literacy course on topics such as birth spacing, family planning methods, oral rehydration therapy, immunisations and good nutrition. These supplementary lessons were taught by class supervisors, most of whom were local health staff. World Education trained the facilitators and monitored the classes.

Phase 2: Beyond this, a post-literacy programme that focused only on health issues was developed. Participants completing the first phase, plus mothers who had already attained a basic level of literacy, attended a three-month course, six times per week for two hours per class (approximately 150 hours of instruction). Classes usually began in mid/late November and continued to mid/late February. The course was taught by the same facilitator, using the new *Diyalo ('Light')* literacy curriculum, which provides the women participants with opportunities to practise and increase their literacy and numeracy skills, using new health-related content including sanitation and clean water, family planning methods, HIV/AIDS, Vitamin A, first aid, malaria treatment, and nutrition and breastfeeding during pregnancy. These materials use the same format (comics, stories, exercises, and participatory activities) as the basic course materials. The supervisors continued to visit the classes, and the CHV group leader played an increasing role in this phase, helping to facilitate small group work or assist the facilitator with teaching.

Phase 3: A third, continuing education, phase, in which the participants would continue their learning as a group but without formal facilitation, was also formulated. This phase would last for twelve months during which the CHV and the women continued their two hours Mothers' Group meetings once a month (approximately 24 hours of instruction) using a series of 12 health readings. Topics would include the village health service system, Vitamin A and nutrition, latrines and pre-natal care. The CHV ran these meetings, using the continuing education materials as a starting point for discussion and health education.

KEY FEATURES

Learner-Generated Materials: Many of the materials created during this phase were developed by the newly literate women themselves. This represented a way both to keep the participants involved in the project and to assure that the materials were relevant and interesting to the learners. Learner-generated materials (LGM) workshops brought together groups of newly literate women, and sponsored them to create new literacy materials. Once printed, these materials were distributed to other women who had recently completed the HEAL programme. In early 1993, three workshops were held in different areas. About 20 women in each workshop stayed overnight in local lodgings. All of the women had completed nine months of basic literacy and post-literacy instruction, but most were still uncertain about their ability to write. Over the next three days, small groups of women chose a subject from a list of health topics and wrote their thoughts as well as poems, songs and stories about these topics. The women's writings were supplemented by an artist's drawings as well as other activities, exercises and additional stories, written by HEAL staff.

Training: Training is extensive and wide-ranging. Participating NGOs and district-level health staff took part in a 2-day orientation about the HEAL project. NGO staff were also given three days training on how to select villages where the classes would be conducted, and how to recruit facilitators and supervisors.

World Education also conducted nine-day Training of Trainers (TOT) courses for NGO trainers who would in turn train class facilitators. These focused on practical skills (e.g. how to use lessons presented in *Naya Goreto* and *Diyalo*, give and receive feedback, ask questions that help in problem solving, and include all participants in class sessions more effectively) and on adult learning principles, the difference between formal and non-formal education, and the role of trainers. TOT participants were given opportunities to practise these skills in order to build their confidence and expertise.

TOT courses were also held for those who train class supervisors, focusing on both theoretical and practical aspects of supervision. Participants concentrated on developing communication skills and learning how to solicit information from facilitators and class participants about the running of the class. Supervisors were also trained in how to teach the supplementary health lessons with an opportunity to practise teaching these lessons to their peers during the training. Once trained, the NGO trainers would have the capacity to deliver the facilitator and supervisor training independently, with on-going support and technical assistance provided by World Education.

Monitoring: Project monitoring was conducted by World Education staff to ensure that NGOs were implementing literacy classes in a timely and effective way, that materials were being distributed and used properly, and that all organisations were informed of project progress. Monitoring occurred through

- ***ongoing supervision*** by field supervisors in each district; these visited classes and met regularly with NGO staff to make sure they were carrying out the implementation plan. They also provided assistance with accounting and data collection, and ensured that progress was reported and issues dealt with in a timely manner;

- ***supervision*** by the project coordinators. They visited the districts on a regular basis and communicated information between the NGOs, field supervisors and staff of the INGO partners;

- ***quarterly District-level co-ordination meetings***, whereby staff from the INGOs, NGOs and public health/education sectors met to discuss and solve project problems as they arose;

- ***monthly central-level co-ordination meetings***, whereby staff from the INGOs met to share information and make improvements in project implementation.

EVALUATION

Internal and external reviews show that the HEAL project achieved considerable results. Completion rates for the post-literacy course ranged from 84-98% across all classes, while examination pass rates ranged from 51-82%. Interviews with

NGO members and health staff in project districts indicated that visible changes resulting from participation in the programme included the building of latrines, improved sanitation in HEAL communities, enrolment of some participants in the formal school system after completion of the course, and increased awareness of family planning and health services and practices. Data on health knowledge gained by women who participated in the HEAL pilot programme (1992-1994) showed that HEAL participants gained more knowledge than either those women who completed a non-HEAL basic literacy course or those women who received only health education from a CHV. In addition, women who completed the HEAL post-literacy course acquired more health knowledge than schooled women who had received CHV-led health education.

The evaluations found that discussion of health issues was often given less emphasis by participants and facilitators than the teaching of literacy skills. In some districts, women were found trying to write in their native language rather than Nepali (which is the language of the course book) which complicated learning. All classes interviewed found mathematics to be the hardest part of the course, and the evaluators found that facilitators' skills also were weakest in this area. As a result, there was little difference in the mathematics scores between participants and non-participants.

Most women reported their confidence and sense of identity had changed since taking the HEAL course. They provided instances, such as being able to write their names instead of using a thumbprint, being able to read a prescription or knowing exactly what a liter was in relation to local measures as being examples of powerful new skills. Some women also indicated that their newly acquired ability to write letters to their husbands or to help their children with their homework were valuable to them.

USAID has continued to support the program. Currently World Education in partnership with local NGOs is running over 1,000 basic and post-literacy classes using the HEAL approach.

—Chij Shrestha

This case study has been adapted from a paper prepared by Chij Shrestha and the staff of World Education for a workshop on innovation and good practice in adult literacy organised by the Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE). We are grateful for permission to include it here in its revised form.

CASE STUDY

SOUTH AFRICA

The Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme

BACKGROUND TO THE LITERACY PROGRAMME

The Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA) based in Durban, South Africa, has for the past two years been running a literacy programme which is unique internationally. What makes this programme unique is that all the learners and facilitators are over the age of 60, thereby challenging many stereotypes about who can learn and who can teach.

The literacy programme forms part of a wider range of services which MUSA offers to its members who consist of older people in two Durban communities. One of MUSA's main objectives is to empower older people to live independent lives in the community for as long as possible. Services include providing home care for housebound older people, running sewing classes and a lunch club.

PLANNING AND SETTING UP THE LITERACY PROGRAMME

The literacy programme is currently funded by HelpAge International with DFID funding. It was implemented in response to the findings of a general needs assessment which was conducted amongst the members of MUSA. To the surprise of the organisation, it was found that members identified literacy as a key need. Reasons for this had a great deal to do with practical issues like not getting cheated in shops and in government pension payouts. A deeper and more poignant reason given by many members was the need to remedy the sense of loss created by not being able to go to school or having had to curtail schooling. In this sense, literacy had as much symbolic as practical value.

After the general needs assessment, a literacy needs assessment was conducted in which literacy needs and practices became the focus. This was based on a 'social uses of literacy' model and relied on the work of writers like Brian Street, Mastin Prinsloo, and Juliet Millican who conducted the participatory needs assessment with members of the MUSA community. A large part of this process consisted of identifying literacy practices and events specific to the community and locating real literacy materials, i.e. documents which occurred naturally in the environment such as pension forms, bank forms, health pamphlets.

MUSA, in consultation with British consultants and HelpAge International, decided to engage the services of two Durban-based agencies: one to do the facilitator training and support (NASA – an NGO specialising in adult basic education, ABE), and the other to do monitoring and evaluation of the literacy programme (Department of Adult and Community Education, University of Natal).

It was decided that a full-time literacy co-ordinator would be appointed and that a literacy committee, consisting of MUSA members, the co-ordinator, and representatives of the learners and facilitators would steer the work of the literacy programme. In addition, a working committee of the training agency (NASA), the evaluation agency (University of Natal) and the MUSA director and literacy co-ordinator was established to ensure coherent implementation of the literacy learning programme.

It was agreed that the literacy programme would focus on mother-tongue literacy (Zulu), numeracy and oral English. In addition, there would be a ìliteracy problemî hour during which learners would bring practical literacy problems such as reading an electricity bill, or writing a letter, to the classes so that the facilitators could assist them on an individual basis.

The facilitators were to be trained for 20 days in the above three subject areas, with the expectation that they were to use a theme-based approach, create their own lesson plans, produce their own teaching-learning materials and use real literacy materials. They were to receive ongoing and intensive support from the training agency.

IMPLEMENTATION

During the first phase of facilitator training, the facilitators were inducted into the social literacy/real literacy approach in which they identified literacy practices and located real materials as well as received training in the teaching of Zulu, English and numeracy. The training agency used a language experience approach with the addition of some syllabic and phonic work for the training of mother tongue literacy facilitators; for numeracy they used a constructivist approach; and for English as a second language, they used a communicative approach.

Recruitment was successful and the literacy programme began with approximately 90 learners ranging from people who could not read and write at all, to people who were fairly competent in literacy in Zulu (the dominant language of the region). Most learners were at the stage of being able to read and write at a very basic level in Zulu but unable to utilise these skills.

Six sites were selected for the literacy classes in community halls and libraries, with two facilitators appointed to each site. The facilitators, who came from the communities concerned were aged over 60, unemployed and most did not have any prior teaching experience. They were paid on an hourly basis for their teaching time, in addition to which they were expected to prepare for teaching and attend meetings with the co-ordinator and the training agency. Each literacy group attends classes twice a week for a total of 8 hours per week.

Most classes are divided into two groups because of the difficulty of teaching absolute beginners with more fluent readers and writers. This has had the effect of creating two *de facto* groups within the same venue, with each of the facilitators taking responsibility for either the beginner or advanced group. Despite this separation of the groups, there is still a great deal of variety in terms of learners' literacy, numeracy and English second language abilities.

Both pedagogically and ideologically, the social literacy approach has proved to be more difficult to implement than originally envisaged. On a practical level, the facilitators struggled with the lack of structure of such an approach, and found it difficult to plan, design and implement lessons based on real materials and not relying on workbooks. In addition, both learners and facilitators placed a high value on schooling and in many cases wanted the classes to be like school. The literacy programme was therefore complicated due to different and sometimes competing conceptions of the meaning, uses and purposes of literacy education.

Various attempts were made to remedy these problems with varying degrees of success. Finally, with the guidance of the external consultant, a curriculum has been adopted since the beginning of 1999 which balances the facilitators' desire for structure and the learners' need for schooling with the original social literacy aims of the programme. Facilitators and trainers identified topics and time frames for six themes for the year: the election; health and hospitals; church; newspapers; social events and letter-writing; and shopping. Workbooks and library books were bought for each class. The training agency provides a key role in supporting the facilitators with lesson planning and finding appropriate materials.

Facilitators meet once a week with the co-ordinator to discuss progress and problems. The training agency observes classes regularly, gives immediate feedback and assistance, and holds monthly in-service workshops with the facilitators. The evaluators observe classes and in-service training, and hold regular meetings with MUSA and the training agency to give feedback and support. Reports are written by all parties on a regular basis and distributed amongst each other and to the funders.

The literacy learners say that they enjoy the variety which the recently revised approach offers, while the facilitators say that they enjoy the security and flexibility of the revised approach. The learners love being able to borrow and read library books in simple English and Zulu. They look forward to the annual graduation ceremony in which all those who have attended consistently for the year receive certificates based on the exams which they have written.

CONCLUSION

The MUSA literacy programme has faced many of the common problems and pitfalls of literacy programmes around the world. However, poor attendance and impatience are not amongst the problems which it faces. Because older people have time on their hands, because they receive multiple benefits from attending literacy classes such as companionship, advice and support, and refreshments, attendance is very good. Some of the learners say that they will go to classes until they die. Ongoing funding is a major problem, particularly given the current concern of funders that literacy should be directly linked to skills development and employment creation.

The literacy programme has proved that older people are not only capable of learning the basics of reading and writing but of growing in confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness in the process.

Recent comments from learners speak for themselves:

> **"I can hold a pencil now and write."**
>
> **"I can write my name."**
>
> **"I can read a newspaper now."**
>
> **"I feel very confident - last year's results have motivated me."**
>
> **"I did not know what year I was born. All I knew was that I was born during the year of the influenza epidemic. After attending the classes, I have been able to read a book from our box library. In this book, it spoke about the year of the influenza and now I know the exact year that I was born – it was 1918".**
>
> **"I went to the polling station to cast my vote. I was given only one ballot paper. We had recently done 'Voting' as a theme in our class, so I knew that I was supposed to have two ballot papers. I asked the man for the other ballot paper, and felt proud and confident when I cast my votes."**
>
> **"I borrow books from the box library and get together with my neighbour and we read the books together and help each other to understand them."**
>
> **"I wrote out the entire story of the library book so that when I returned the book to the library, I still had my own copy to read over and over again."**

—Elda Lyster

Elda Lyster works in the Department of Adult and Community Education in the University of Natal, Durban. She is part of the evaluation team for the MUSA Literacy Program.

Appendices

Appendix A: Notes to the Trainer

Appendix B: Case Study Questions

Appendix C: Further Reading and References

Notes to the Trainer

INTRODUCTION:

1. Not all the training **methods** we can use are mentioned in this manual. Each of us will of course have our own preferred methods which we have built up by experience. We can also get suggestions from other training manuals, especially local ones (see **Further Reading** for some suggested reading on training methods).

We suggest that you take each topic and work out your own activities and methods.

2. We found **two possible approaches:**
   a) to explain the text and then proceed to the Activity boxes (this was best done if the participants were able to read the text the previous evening)
   b) to start with the Activity boxes and use the text to explain what we were doing and why. In the field test, we varied our approaches, but we found that we used b) more often towards the end of the training program.

3. Our field test showed the value of **visits**. We strongly suggest that you and the trainees go out if possible. This may help to determine the **location** of your training program.

4. Contact the trainees before they come if you can, asking them **to bring with them**
   a) examples of real texts found in their own localities
   b) examples of traditional teaching-learning materials from their area, such as primers
   c) job descriptions of facilitators and supervisors, if these exist
   d) details of their evaluation systems, including tests.

5. **Reading:**

We wanted the trainees to read and study the text as a major part of the training program rather than take it away for (possible) later reading. But we were not always successful in this.

a) ***Reading before:*** We wished we had been able to send out the first three chapters of this manual (especially Chapter 1) for the trainees to read before they came to the training program. You could try to do this if possible. Otherwise the trainees will always be catching up with the reading.

b) ***Reading during:*** The trainees in our field test found it hard to read the chapters before the next day's training sessions. We did not allow them enough time for this. We tried to keep the training sessions short but this was not always possible. But they found reading in small groups helpful. We handed out each set of chapters each day rather than the whole manual at the start.

c) ***Reading after:*** We did however learn that some subjects – for example, evaluation, or teaching-learning materials – do not need to be dealt with in full here. They only need to be introduced here, for they can be read up afterwards and can form the subject of a full training program later. We were tempted to go into too much detail on several of the subjects dealt with in the manual.

6. **Invite**
a) some facilitators to come in for day 4.
b) some managers to come in for day 5.

7. We found it useful for the trainees to keep their own **journal** during the training.

8. **Monitoring and evaluating the training program:** We formed the trainees into four small groups. At the end of each day, the groups met to evaluate the day. One member from each group (normally a different member each day) met with the trainers later that evening to form the training management group. This group evaluated the day past on the basis of the small group reports and planned the next day's program.

SUGGESTED FIVE DAY OUTLINE

Assemble previous day

DAY 1:

Morning:	Introductions (Chapter 1): share experiences and outline the distinctive approach of this manual. What is Literacy? (Chapter 2)
Afternoon:	What group shall we work with? (Chapter 3)
Evening:	reading Chapters 4 and 5

DAY 2:

Morning:	What approach shall we use? (Chapter 4) How shall we evaluate the program? (Chapter 5)
Afternoon:	Field visit (this can come earlier or on the morning of Day 3, if it suits the local timetable)
Evening:	reading Chapters 6 and 7

DAY 3:

Morning:	Setting the objectives (Chapter 6) Evaluating the planning process (this is a brief session reviewing how far we have come – a pause for thinking).
Afternoon:	Resourcing the program (Chapter 7)
Evening:	reading Chapters 8 and 9

DAY 4: [bring in facilitators]

Morning:	Facilitators (Chapter 8)
Afternoon:	Materials (Chapter 9) Evaluate the implementing process (brief review session and again a pause for discussions with the facilitators)
Evening:	reading Chapters 10-12

DAY 5: [bring in some managers]

Morning:	Running the program; the role of supervisors and reports (Chapter 10) Widening and continuing the program (Chapters 11 and 12): we found it useful to run the first five parts of Chapter 12 with Chapter 11.
Afternoon:	Final session: an evaluation and consideration of where do we go from here? based on Chapter 12, Part 6. Participants to write their own Action Plans

Appendix B

Case Study Questions

1. What kind of literacy group is this – an already existing or a new group? was it engaged on any other activity before starting the literacy program? Is it a homogenous (all non-literate) or a heterogeneous (mixed non-literate and literate) group? Are there any special features about it?

2. Does it use a particular teaching-learning approach? e.g. whole language approach; real literacies approach; LGM; REFLECT; etc? Does it concentrate on learning letters, words, syllables (phonics)? What language is used – the local language or another language (why?)?

3. Who provides the resources used? for example, the building (describe the meeting place)? the equipment? the funding? Do the participants pay for anything? How far is the local community involved (and how)?

4. How are the facilitators chosen? who are they (e.g. unemployed youth; students; school teachers; local volunteers; others)? how are they trained? does your organisation do the training itself or get another agency to train them? Are any facilitators involved as trainers? How are the facilitators supported in their work? Are they paid? Are any of them full-timers? Do they report – to whom and how often? Are they all new to this work or are some already experienced?

5. What kind of teaching-learning materials are used in the learning sessions? who prepared these? are any supplementary materials used by the group members? are any materials provided by the literacy learners? are any of the materials written by the literacy learners?

6. How is the program managed? how is it supervised? how are problems dealt with as they arise? what is the role of the village/urban literacy support group (if there is one)? Can you give examples of some problems which arose?

7. Do the literacy learners engage in any other activities such as discussion meetings, income-generation, credit and savings etc? what is the relationship between these activities and the literacy learning program? do the group members have any links with other development workers or programs?

8. How is the program evaluated? who is it evaluated by? when is the evaluation carried out? who receives the evaluation? how is the evaluation used? Do the participants take a test/receive a certificate?

9. What activities are planned for the group after the end of the literacy learning program?

Appendix C

Further Reading and References

We have provided here some suggestions for further reading and sources of information. We have included some web sites, for experience suggests that some agencies in developing countries can access web sites more easily than they can obtain books and reports.

We have tried to keep this list short; it is not intended to be comprehensive. But equally we have tried to include items which may be obtainable in different parts of the world.

This list also includes references to works which we have quoted in the text of this manual.

We are grateful to Lisa Deyo for assistance with compiling this section; but she is not responsible for its contents or for any errors and omissions.

We hope that you will choose from these what you find useful and that you add to these what is available in your own context.

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